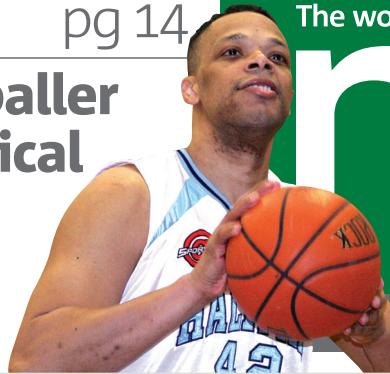


Local baller has lyrical nod in Jay-Z song?



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• WEEKEND JANUARY 23-25 2009

metronews

Depp's fiancée wants perfect ring



RCMP arrests pair in strange theft

CRIME RCMP have charged twins with stealing ... meat.

On Wednesday at 7:15 p.m., Superstore security saw the 20-year-olds allegedly put chicken and steaks into bags and leave without paying. Unfortunately for the twins, the store also has video security. They were arrested with the purloined poultry at 9:40 p.m. They'll be in court March 18.

METRO HALIFAX

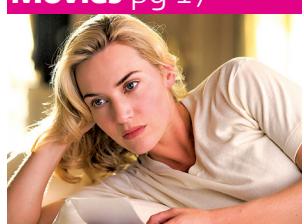
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The 81st annual Academy Awards

- Button, Slumdog lead way, page 16
- Quotes, page 16
- Rick McGinnis, page 22

Movies pg 17



Dull side of domestic hell

Going out pg 24

What to do this weekend

Entertainment pg 25

Memoirs of a tattoo artist



Fisherman's Market 607 Bedford Hwy. 443-3474



RYAN TAPLIN/TRADEITIONAL

Steven Colley, centre, is escorted into the Dartmouth courthouse on Thursday. Colley is charged with first-degree murder, attempted murder and four weapons-related charges.

Police act quickly

Arrest made already in alleged murder

JENNIFER TAPLIN



A court appearance lasted just minutes yesterday for the man accused in HRM's first alleged murder of the year.

Steven Maurice Colley, 49, was charged with first-degree murder, attempted murder, and four weapons-related charges. The four weapons-related charges are based on a shotgun Colley allegedly had.

Andre Jonathan Edward Slawter, 20, was found shot dead in a car parked near his home on Brian Street in East Preston at around 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday. Tywan Kimo Slawter, 35,

Other charges and the victim

- Tywan Slawter is also facing assault and confinement charges. He is scheduled to appear in Dartmouth court on Feb. 3.

was also in the vehicle but received minor injuries.

Hiding his face from cameras, Colley was brought into Dartmouth court Thursday afternoon. He sat silently as the charges were listed and a court date of Feb. 17 was set.

Crown attorney Arthur Theuerkauf said the prosecution will have to wait until it has the full police report before deciding if the

- The murder victim, Andre (Onnie) Slawter has a Facebook page that is filling up with messages of condolences to his family.

first-degree murder charge will be downgraded.

And there's no word on bail yet.

"Any person charged with murder must apply for bail to the Supreme Court," said Theuerkauf. "I suspect once they have disclosure, they will decide whether or not they'll make that application."

If the case goes to trial, it could take about a year to get a court date, Theuer-

kauf added.

According to court documents, Colley lives on Caledonia Road, where police followed a suspect vehicle after Wednesday's alleged shooting on Brian Street.

He's also facing charges of assault on a different matter and was scheduled to appear in court on Feb. 12.

Those charges related to an incident on Sept. 20 when two men and a woman were allegedly assaulted.

According to court documents, Andre Slawter was due to appear in court on Feb. 23 and June 17 for charges of assault, threats and court order breaches.

Backing

- This is the third time since 2002 the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada, which released the updated medical advice, said women and doctors have been needlessly frightened away from hormone therapy after raft of troubling reports linked it with an increased risk for breast cancer, heart attacks and strokes.

But new research — and re-analysis of old evidence — has found short-term use of hormone therapy by women early in menopause is the most effective way to alleviate symptoms of menopause and has "little appreciable effect on risk," said Dr. Robert Reid, a co-author of the guidelines and chair of the division of reproductive endocrinology and infertility at Queen's University in Ontario.

Hormone therapy has been embroiled in controversy since the U.S. National Institutes of Health suddenly stopped the Women's Health Initiative trial in July 2002 after investigators linked the drugs with higher rates of breast cancer, heart attacks and stroke.

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Gas prices expected to go up

Didn't fill up your gas tank? That's gonna cost you. Experts predicted gas would shoot up another 4.5 cents per litre, which would put it at 85.2 cents per litre in Halifax. **METRO HALIFAX**

Local



Yarmouth ferry gets \$12M boost

The province is giving up to \$12 million to keep the Yarmouth to Maine Cat high-speed ferry running. Rising fuel costs and the economic downturn have cut down the number of tourists taking the ferry, which employs 100 people in Yarmouth. Eighty-five thousand people used the Cat in 2008.

METRO HALIFAX

Not guilty verdict in condom case

Putting holes in condom not assault: Judge

RACHEL BOOMER
rachel.boomer@metronews.ca

A Dartmouth man who put holes in his girlfriend's condoms in an attempt to get her pregnant didn't sexually assault her, a Nova Scotia Supreme Court judge ruled yesterday.

Craig Jaret Hutchinson, 38, had been charged with aggravated sexual assault in the case. Justice Gerald Moir acquitted him yesterday, ruling Hutchinson, who sabotaged the condoms after his girlfriend began suggesting she wanted to break up, didn't expose her to a "significant risk" of physical harm.

"The evidence suggests Mr. Hutchinson did something that was not only fraudulent, it was dastardly — but it does not prove sexual assault," Moir said.

"Whether it proves some other crime, I don't know."

Hutchinson smiled, but didn't comment to reporters. His ex-girlfriend wasn't in court when the verdict was read.

The couple dated for nine months in 2006, and broke up in November. Hutchinson's girlfriend testified she began discussing a breakup the summer of 2006, but Hutchinson wanted to save the relationship.

The couple continued to use condoms, as they had throughout their relationship, but Hutchinson started to insist his girlfriend take pregnancy tests. In ear-



Craig Jaret Hutchinson, 38, smiles after his acquittal yesterday in Nova Scotia Supreme Court. Hutchinson was charged with aggravated sexual assault for poking holes in his girlfriend's condoms.

ly September, she found out she was pregnant.

After the two broke up, Hutchinson sent a series of text messages to his ex, telling her to throw out the condoms she kept in her bedside table.

"I poked holes in all of them. I wanted a baby with you so bad, I sabotaged them," read one of the messages.

She had an abortion at the nine-week mark, and got a three-week infection afterward.

Defence lawyer Patrick

MacEwan didn't dispute the text messages in court. He successfully argued that the sabotage wasn't a sexual assault and that it couldn't be proved the couple used any of the sabotaged condoms.

The woman agreed to sleep with Hutchinson, and could have gotten pregnant during one of the times they didn't use a condom, he said.

Crown attorney Jennifer MacLellan had argued piercing the condoms negated the woman's consent.

Crown considering appeal

Crown attorney Jennifer MacLellan said yesterday she's considering an appeal, and believes the case could end up at the Supreme Court of Canada.

"It is so unique. I haven't been able to find a lot of case law. Given that it involves such a serious women's issue, I think a higher court might take an interest," MacLellan said.

She said provincial

court Judge Anne Derrick, when she sent the case to trial, made a ruling that was exactly the opposite of Moir's decision yesterday.

Derrick, a lower-court judge, had ruled that a jury might be able to conclude the sabotage meant the sex wasn't consensual, and that it did expose her to physical risks associated with pregnancy.

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What's online today.

Video Police investigate shooting on Toronto subway at metronews.ca/canada
Blog Political Stripes on the scramble to make nice to Obama, and Hollywood Rants takes aim at Oscar noms at metronews.ca/canada
Video Vancouver Taser inquiry hears from victim's mother at metronews.ca/canada

Greene's comparison of NDP to communists upsets opposition

PAUL MCLEOD
paul.mcleod@metronews.ca



CONTROVERSY Could Darrell Jong-Il be the next premier of Nova Scotia? Or perhaps Fidel Dexter?

Opposition parties were shaking their heads yesterday after one of Nova Scotia's new Tory senators compared the "socialism" of NDP Leader Darrell Dexter and his party to North Korea and Cuba.



Darrell Dexter

Stephen Greene, former deputy chief of staff to Premier Rodney MacDonald who was recently named to the Senate, made the remarks Jan. 17 at a nomination meeting in Aylesford. They were

reported by the Kings County Register.

Yesterday Dexter dismissed the jab as "rhetorical nonsense."

"When they have to resort to rhetoric of this nature, it poses the question of how seriously can you actually take them?" he said.

But Liberal Leader Stephen McNeil did think Greene should apologize. And he called on Premier Rodney MacDonald to denounce the insults.

"Many Nova Scotians are fed up with politicians. They're tired of this kind of behaviour and when

one of us does it, it tarnishes us all," said McNeil.

Greene made the comments as part of his speech about the "outstanding leadership" of Rodney MacDonald and how he should be elected over the NDP.

He argued against the perception that an NDP government is inevitable.

"Are we going to ignore the lessons of the 21st century? No, and we have to prove it in the next election," the Register quoted him as saying.

MacDonald refused to comment on Greene's statements, saying he didn't know anything about them.

"I'm not even going to get into nonsense comments," said MacDonald.

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Gas sales dropped 14.9 per cent at pumps across the country in November, the largest monthly drop since September 2006, says Stats Can. Retail sales were flat in November, outside the auto sector.

METRO HALIFAX

Hydro project headed for Parrsboro

PAUL MCLEOD
paul.mcleod@metronews.ca

After a year of scouring the Bay of Fundy and more than \$1 million, scientists have found the perfect site for Nova Scotia's tidal energy project.

Three test turbines will be placed near Black Rock, about three kilometres west of Parrsboro. The test project is due to start in 2010 and will generate enough power for 3,000 homes.

"The amount of water that moves into the Bay of Fundy in one direction exceeds all the flow of water of all the streams and rivers in the world," said Scott Travers, president of Minas Basin Pulp and Power.

"This is our chance to prove we can harness this energy in what is considered to be the most prized tidal resource in the world."

Black Rock was picked because it's deep, sediment-free and free of turbulence.

Travers' company is working with U.K.-based Marine Current Turbines on one of the three turbines. Marine Current recently installed the world's most powerful in-stream tidal turbine in Northern Ireland.

Tidal power is currently much more expensive than

"This is our chance to prove we can harness this energy in what is considered to be the most prized tidal resource in the world."

Scott Travers of Minas Basin Pulp and Power

wind, another source of green energy. But one major advantage of tidal is that the steady tides offer a much more dependable energy source.

The turbines are set to be up and running by 2010, but they are only a test project set to last about two years. Their five-megawatt output makes up less than two per cent of Nova Scotia's electricity needs.

But Travers said if the tests go well, permanent turbines will be put in place that will last between 50 and 100 years.

"We're pioneers here. We're going to learn an awful lot about what kind of problems we encounter. It'll help us from there in a controlled, methodical way, working with the province, with what other areas in the Bay of Fundy we can go to," said Travers.

African dance **Home from D.C.**



Mufaro Chakabuda performs a traditional African dance along with drummer Wayn Hamilton at Citadel High School on Thursday. Chakabuda and Hamilton recently performed at the African Inaugural Ball in Washington, D.C., along with other dancers and drummers from the Maritime Centre for African Dance.

Chance to explore wild side at sex show

JENNIFER TAPLIN
jennifer.taplin@metronews.ca

Sex sells — or at least organizers of a new exhibition hitting Halifax hope so.

The first annual Everything to Do with Sex Show opens Friday at 5 p.m. at the Cunard Centre in Halifax.

"Erotica is no longer a bad word," said the show's manager Mikey Singer in a statement yesterday.

"Our show provides the very best entertainment for all of our attendees to explore their wilder sides, whether it's testing the latest and greatest in the toy industry, or simply just figuring out how to talk a bit naughty with their significant others."

Among the highlights will be pole dancing demonstrations, lingerie fashion

"Erotica is no longer a bad word."

Mikey Singer, show manager

shows and body casting and painting.

There will be seminars on "tushie time," and erotic talk, as well. Entertainment on the Dungeon stage will feature performances entitled Adventurous Kinky Play 101, Sexy Girl Uninhibited, and Sumptuous Body Licks.

"There really is something for everyone, whatever taste and/or preference they may have," Singer said.

The show made stops in London and Toronto in the fall, and will set up in Montreal in February.

The show opens runs until Sunday.

Atlantic Canada economy bearing up, says brewer

RACHEL BOOMER
rachel.boomer@metronews.ca

The recession that started outside Atlantic Canada's borders is hurting us, but not as badly as you might think, says New Brunswick beer magnate Andrew Oland.

Oland, president of Moosehead Breweries, was in town this week to speak at the Halifax Grammar

School's 50th anniversary. He told Metro on Thursday that compared to the previous 1990s recession, unemployment numbers — particularly in the cities — have stayed relatively low.

"It's still pretty close to traditional levels. If we're through the worst of (the recession), then the region will be OK."

In December 2008, Halifax boasted a 5.8 per cent unemployment rate — lower than the national rate of 6.6 per cent. Nova Scotia had 8.2 per cent unemployment.

Moosehead keeps a close eye on this, of course, because if you don't have a job, you're probably not buying much beer.

"People need money in their pockets. It's an affordable luxury; if someone's looking to splurge on themselves, they can buy a case of beer to share," Oland said.

But he expects local projects will continue to keep the economy going in this region. New Brunswick has the refurbishment of the Point Lepreau nuclear plant, along with a new LNG terminal and a proposed new refinery.

"I notice a fair amount of economic growth in Halifax. Whenever I'm in Halifax, I'm amazed. It just seems like any piece of land around the harbour you can put a house on, people are trying to do that."



PUBLIC MEETINGS

School Review: Alderney School

The Halifax Regional School Board is currently conducting a school review of Alderney School, a grade Primary to six school in Dartmouth.

In accordance with the *Education Act and Regulations*, an *Impact Assessment Report* has been prepared looking at potential options regarding the future of the school.

A Study Committee has been formed and has responded to the *Impact Assessment Report*.

As part of the process, the school board will hold public meetings to give the public an opportunity to make representations to the Study Committee's response.

The meetings will take place at the following times:

Monday, February 2, 2009, 7 p.m.
Alderney School
2 Penhorn Drive, Dartmouth

(If necessary)
Tuesday, February 3, 2009, 7 p.m.
Alderney School
2 Penhorn Drive, Dartmouth

Members of the public interested in making a representation should contact the Halifax Regional School Board at 464-2000 ext. 2321 or e-mail corporatesecretary@hrsb.ns.ca.



A copy of the *Impact Assessment Report* and the Study Committee's response can be found on the board's website at www.hrsb.ns.ca/content/id/1030.html or by contacting the board using the information previously mentioned.

A decision on the future of Alderney School will be made by the school board no later than March 31, 2009.

The board could decide, among other things, to:

- keep the school open;
- consolidate the school, or a part of the school, with another public school; or
- permanently close the school.



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Canadians think Tuesday's federal budget should include across-the-board tax cuts. A new poll for H&R Block had showed 68 per cent of the Atlantic region supporting tax cuts. The highest support was in Québec at 76 per cent. METRO HALIFAX

Talks aim to avert school bus strike

Hopes hang on weekend meeting to stave off Tuesday picket

JENNIFER TAPLIN
jennifer.taplin@metronews.ca

Last-ditch efforts to stop a school bus driver strike will be taking place this weekend.

Drivers were fired up on Wednesday night as they staged an information picket in front of the Halifax Regional School Board office in Dartmouth.

"It's to let the school board know we are serious and that we will be going on strike as of Tuesday morning unless our employer comes back to the table with a fair offer," said bus driver Pat Briggs.

She's driven a special needs bus for 29 years and she makes \$12.49 an hour for five hours a day.

"I made more than that in 2001 and I had a pension at that time. Now I don't have a pension," Briggs said.

The 300 drivers, monitors and mechanics are "ready to go" on strike, she said. They will be in a strike position as of 12:01 a.m. on Tuesday.

If there is a strike, it



School bus drivers, mechanics and monitors staged an information picket outside the Halifax Regional School Board office in Dartmouth on Wednesday.

will mean 23,000 kids in the Halifax Regional School Board will have to find their own way to school.

"We certainly have a

"None of us wanted to come down to a strike, but we believe we deserve a fair wage for the job that we do."

Bus driver Pat Briggs

message for the kids and the parents that we're very sorry that we have to do this," Briggs said.

"None of us wanted to come down to a strike, but we believe we deserve a fair wage for the job that we do."

Joan Jessome, president of the Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union, said there will be another meeting, and another offer from Stock Transportation on Saturday.

"Chances (of a strike) are still strong," she said. "We're not going to bring back a peanut offer. They have to be very serious about what they're going to table on us."

ShareYourViews
halifaxletters@metronews.ca



Truro businessman Dick Cotterill is a former U.S. marine who deserted to Nova Scotia during the Vietnam War. He believes today's American war deserters should be welcome in Canada.

Vietnam war deserter says Canada should welcome soldiers fleeing Iraq duty

MILITARY Instead of deporting American military deserters, Canada should be welcoming them as potential immigrants, says a former U.S. marine who ended up in Nova Scotia during the Vietnam war.

"I have a lot of respect for the military," said Bible Hill resident Dick Cotterill, who made his way to Canada in 1972 after "skipping out" on his marine squadron stationed in Hawaii.

But he said five U.S. deserters currently facing deportation by the end of the month should be allowed to stay because they refused to fight an "illegal and immoral" war.

Making the decision to leave your home and family behind, go into hiding and escape to another country, he said, comes only after someone can no longer support the war effort on ethical grounds.

"Some people say that these people weren't drafted, they volunteered. Well, I

wasn't drafted. I volunteered and a lot of these people, the same thing that happened to me is happening to them."

Cotterill joined the Marines in 1969. In his day, the enemy was communism, and Cotterill believed fighting was patriotic.

Three years into his service, his views changed.

"As I met the men and women who were coming home from Vietnam ... it became a moral decision for me," he said. "I didn't want to participate in that war."

He tried to get status as a conscientious objector. When that failed, he hopped a plane for home and deserted the military.

Cotterill became acquainted with some anti-war protesters at Cornell University and from there, found his way to Nova Scotia.

He's now a dual citizen, with a family, and is co-owner of a successful business.

HARRY SULLIVAN/TRURO DAILY NEWS

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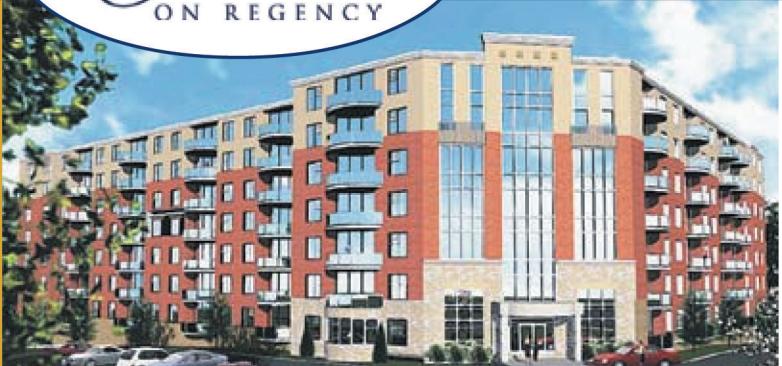
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8 local

Art Gallery of Nova Scotia opens following water leak

FIXED The Art Gallery of Nova Scotia has reopened to the public after a leak seeped into gallery space.

The Flight Dreams will stay closed until the weekend, though. Artwork was

removed as a precaution while staff were assessing and fixing the leak. You can still catch Flight Dreams until March 1. Joe Fafard closes Feb. 8.

METRO HALIFAX

Province slashes copayment for seniors' pharmacare

HEALTH The province is cutting the co-payment for seniors' pharmacare. Starting April 1, those older than 65 will pay 30 per cent of the cost of their prescriptions. Currently, the copayment is 33 per cent.

The maximum annual copayment will stay at \$382, so once a senior has

paid that amount, the province will pick up the rest of the tab. There are about 99,000 people in the provincial seniors pharmacare program, which costs \$193 million to operate. The government picks up 75 per cent of the cost; seniors pick up the other 25 per cent.

METRO HALIFAX

Trumped competition can put money in your pockets

CAMPAIGN Starving students, starve no more. If you've got a small-business idea, you could win \$10,000 in bursaries and prizes in the annual Trumped competition at Saint Mary's University.

Each year, students compete to produce and imple-

ment a business marketing campaign. Students from Dalhousie, Saint Mary's and Mount Saint Vincent universities will compete.

If you would like to take part, call 240-5324 or go to trumped.ca.

METRO HALIFAX

Halifax Public Libraries wins Working Together award

PROJECT The Halifax Public Libraries has won the Ontario Library Presidents' Award for Working Together, a project that aims to bring poor, homeless, minorities, immigrants and

illiterate people into the library.

In Halifax, staff at the Captain William Spry Library went door-to-door to encourage residents to use the library.

METRO HALIFAX

News in brief

TENDER The province has put out tenders for four road-paving projects. In Halifax, it's a paving project for a 9.7-kilometre stretch of road from the intersection of Route 336 to Route 224, to the Colchester County line. There are three oth-

ers — in Cape Breton, Yarmouth County and Colchester County.

SHUT Cohen MacInnis admitted defeat Wednesday and shut his most ambitious investment to date — the Maritime Building.

METRO HALIFAX



Correctly identify the 3 Rainmen players whose numbers, were somewhere in Metro Wednesday, Thursday & the final number which appears today

3 qualifiers will be drawn today and will receive tickets to Metro Night with the Rainmen, Jan. 29 and will compete at half-time for a

CHANCE TO WIN

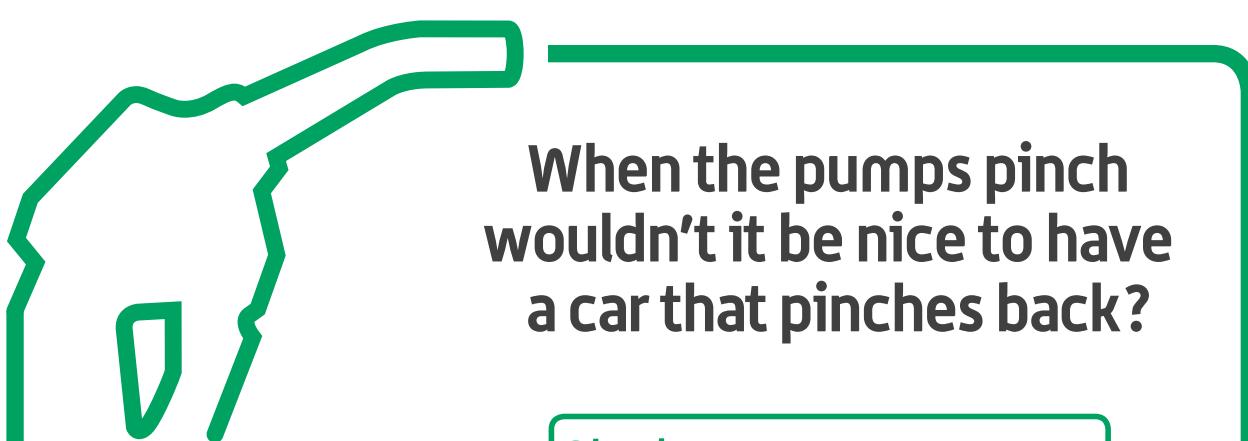
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See the basketball ad for how to qualify!

Half-time contestants will be notified and printed Jan. 27



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Or finance from
2.9%[†]
\$500**
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Rising temperatures killing trees: Report

Trees in western North America are dying twice as quickly as they did 30 years ago, with rising average temperatures almost certainly to blame, researchers reported Thursday. **REUTERS**

Canada

Tories plan to go \$64B in red

Canada will post \$64 billion in deficits over the next two fiscal years to stimulate a flagging economy, but it will return to surplus in five years, a senior government official said Thursday.

The deficits will mark an end to 12 straight years of surpluses for Canada, which had been the only member of the Group of Seven leading industrialized nations still in the black.

The aide said Ottawa would run a deficit of \$30 billion in the following fiscal year, starting April 1, 2010, and deficits would keep getting smaller thereafter. Most of the stimulus spending would be short-term so as to prevent a per-

One surplus left

- The official said government revenues — including corporate and personal taxes — have been declining with the

economic slowdown but, as far as he knew, the budget for the current fiscal year would remain in surplus.

manent deficit from emerging, he said.

The aide was briefing reporters ahead of the minority Conservative government's budget, which it will deliver Tuesday.

In the campaign ahead of the Oct. 14 election, Harper had said a deficit could be avoided, but as the global economy worsened he agreed at a summit in Washington the next month to join in concerted international stimu-

REUTERS

lus efforts. The figure of \$34 billion represents roughly two per cent of the value of the Canadian economy.

Some economists have recently projected that, even without stimulus efforts, the country would run a deficit of between \$10 billion and \$15 billion. The aide said most of the expected deficit resulted from the stimulus package.

Canadians must make tough choices: Layton

ECONOMY With the country facing the worst recession in 70 years, Canadians have tough choices to make — including, for some, taking pay cuts so others can continue to work, NDP Leader Jack Layton says.

"It's that courage of the Canadian people which makes our country strong. Let's match that quiet courage with smart investments for the future. Investments that build on our productivity, not squander our prosperity," Layton said in a speech delivered to the Toronto Board of Trade.

It's that kind of courage workers will need "to take a pay cut so your friends at the plant can keep their job," Layton said.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Stem cells Waiting for a match



Other Half co-chairs Susan Go, left, and Amy Tam get the word out about stem cell donations Thursday in Toronto. People of Chinese decent are under-represented in the stem-cell donor pool to the point the chance of finding a match is less than 10 per cent.

News in brief

SHOOTING The daytime shooting of a man on a Toronto subway platform Thursday disrupted downtown commuter traffic for hours. The 19-year-old victim, whose name was not released, was rushed to hospital and was listed in serious condition. Police are searching for a suspect, and say the victim is co-operating.

ALBERTA Drumheller Institution was put under lockdown Thursday after an inmate was attacked. The 36-year-old was rushed to hospital after he was discovered injured at about 8 a.m. As of Thursday afternoon, he was in hospital and listed as being in stable condition.

SASKATCHEWAN A second man has been charged in connection with a shooting that injured a six-year-old girl in Saskatoon last week, CBC News Online reports. According to the Saskatoon StarPhoenix, the girl suffered a head wound. She's listed in stable condition.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

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37.8 million inauguration viewers still lower than expected
Almost 37.8 million Americans watched the full day of television coverage of U.S. President Barack Obama's inauguration from their homes – less than the record numbers expected. **REUTERS**

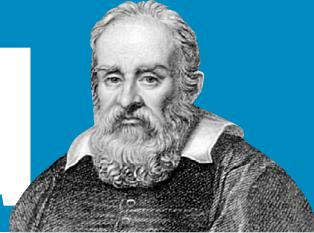
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World



Eyes skyward

Italian and British scientists want to exhume the body of 16th-century astronomer Galileo for DNA tests to determine if his severe vision problems may have affected some of his findings. **REUTERS**

Obama focuses on U.S. image

U.S. President Barack Obama yesterday ordered the closing of Guantanamo prison and named foreign policy troubleshooters for the Middle East and Iran as he moves to repair America's tarnished image.

Obama set a one-year deadline for shutting Guantanamo and barred harsh treatment of terrorism suspects held there.

The prison in Cuba — where prisoners have been detained for years without charge, some subjected to what human rights groups say amounted to torture — had damaged America's moral standing.

Obama waded further into his foreign policy plans by paying a visit to the State Department to welcome Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who was confirmed by the U.S. Senate Wednesday.

His foreign policy goals include pursuing broader engagement overseas than the Bush administration, which was criticized for go-it-alone "cowboy diplomacy," and refocusing the fight against terrorism away from the Iraq war.

Thursday, Obama named George Mitchell, a former senator, as an envoy who will try to jump-start Arab-



KEVIN LAMARQUE / REUTERS

U.S. President Barack Obama, left, and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton chat Thursday after remarks at the State Department in Washington, D.C.

Iraq prepared

- Iraq's military is "prepared for the worst" if Obama orders a swift withdrawal of U.S. troops, its defence minister said.

Israeli peace talks. He also tapped former ambassador to the UN Richard Holbrooke as a special envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan and related issues.

REUTERS

Clinton vows new era in diplomacy

FOREIGN POLICY Hillary Clinton officially took the helm at the State Department Thursday, promising a new era in U.S. diplomacy but tough times ahead.

About 1,000 employees crammed the department and cheered when Clinton arrived for her first full day as secretary of state.

"I will do all that I can working with you to make it abundantly clear that robust diplomacy and effec-

tive development are the best long-term tools for securing America's future," Clinton said.

"I believe with all my heart that this is a new era for America," she said.

Clinton won Senate approval on Wednesday despite Republican concerns about the foreign fundraising activities of her husband, former president Bill Clinton.

REUTERS

UNICEF launches Gaza aid effort

MIDDLE EAST The UN is launching a major aid effort to help tens of thousands of children in the aftermath of Israel's military campaign in Gaza, a top aid official said yesterday.

"We are scaling up our humanitarian support and looking to expand significantly our psychosocial support. The situation is very dire," said Sigrid Kaag, UNICEF regional director

for the Middle East and North Africa.

Kaag said children, who form the majority of the 1.5 million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, bore the brunt of the onslaught by Israeli troops. More than 400 children were among the 1,314 Palestinians killed and more than 1,800 children were injured, many suffering amputations or burns, Kaag said.

"The situation is very dire."

Sigrid Kaag, UNICEF

UNICEF aims to offer mass counselling and first aid. U.N. technical teams are aiming to open schools by mid-February and to repair quickly key water supply systems damaged by the bombing.

REUTERS

News in brief

POLITICS Former secretary of state Condoleezza Rice has signed on with the William Morris Agency which will represent her for books and lecture appearances. It's unlikely that Rice will turn up as a talking head on television, however. The deal includes

William Morris representation for philanthropic initiatives, as well as business initiatives in media, sports and communications, an agency representative said.

U.S. House panel approves \$304B stimulus

FUNDING A House panel yesterday approved a \$304-billion US package of business and individual tax breaks and aid to the unemployed that is to be part of the huge \$825-billion economic stimulus sought by U.S. President Barack Obama.

The tax writing House Ways and Means Committee approved the package, which provides \$275 bil-

lion in tax breaks, on a largely party-line vote.

The package includes a temporary refundable tax credit for workers, up to \$500 per individual and \$1,000 per couple. It also includes tax incentives for renewable energy and allows builders and other companies to write off current losses against five previous tax years. Currently

businesses can write off losses against two previous years.

The bill also provides money to help the unemployed keep health insurance coverage.

The package will be combined with other elements of the proposed stimulus, which the House is expected to vote on next week.

REUTERS

MELAMINE A Chinese court yesterday sentenced two men to death for their role in a tainted milk scandal that killed at least six children and provoked an outpouring of public anger, while the woman most widely blamed for the tragedy got life in jail. Nearly 300,000 children fell ill last year after drinking milk intentionally laced with melamine, a toxic industrial compound that can give a false positive on protein tests.

REUTERS

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Comment & Views

Comment

Ringing the cellphone alarm

Marketplace

Wendy
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It's the dream toy of today's kids. Something they can use to play games. Text best friends. Download the latest Jonas Brothers ring-tone. And call mom. That's right, kids today want cellphones. A survey we did of 1,000 Canadian tweens shows that almost half of them already have a cellphone.

Parents like the idea, too. Companies are keen to market cellphones as a security tool, a way to stay on top of children's whereabouts.

Today's kids are set to become the longest-term users

of cellphones, starting at younger ages than ever before. Great for the phone business, but some scientists are ringing a cautionary alarm bell.

I've been following the debate about cellphone safety for 15 years. During that time, there have been two huge studies that were supposed to get to the bottom of the question, "Can cellphone radiation cause brain cancer?" The first study was inconclusive, and largely funded by the companies that make phones. I've reported on the fact that most of the research money was spent on public relations, not science, allowing companies to stand behind a wall of inconclusive studies showing phones are safe.

But now, there are cracks in that wall. Results from a second big study are trickling out, and some data sug-

gests there is an increased risk of brain tumours. Some scientists say that this is cause for concern. Others say the data is flawed.

This isn't fringe science. The new data comes from a World Health Organization study. It's the first of its kind to take a look at what happens when people use cellphones over a long period. The final report was due three years ago, but it still hasn't been released because the scientists involved are deeply divided. And of course the repercussions are huge.

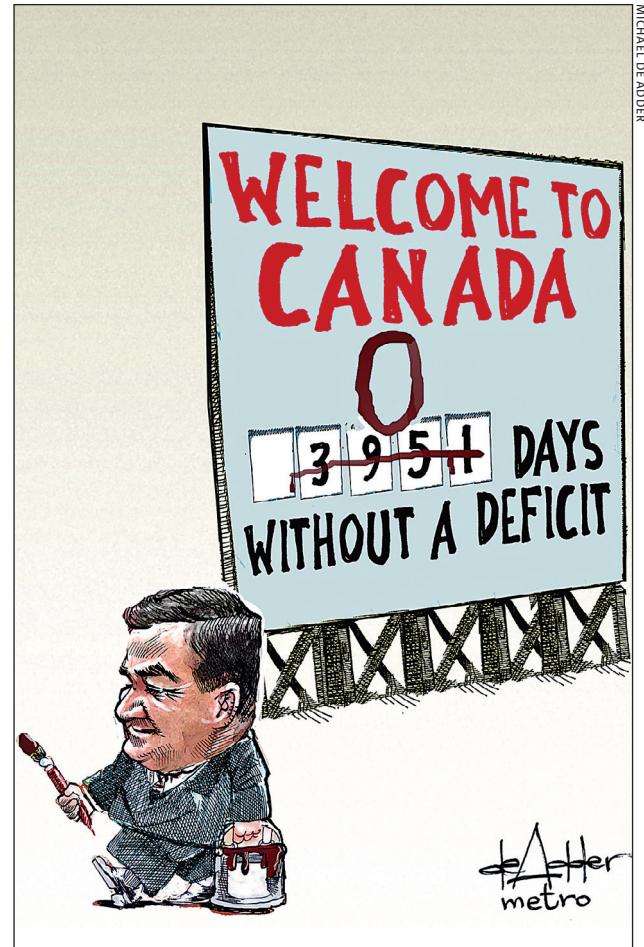
And that's why there is concern about kids. They are a growing cellphone market, and possibly more vulnerable to cellphone radiation. This year, a Swedish scientist released preliminary data that shows kids who start using phones in their teens have a five times higher risk

of developing brain cancer.

In the last two years, warnings about kids using cellphones have been issued in Germany, the U.K., France, Belgium, Israel, Russia, India and Finland. But in Canada? Even though this new evidence is out, Health Canada still says: "There is currently no convincing evidence of serious health effects."

So, until the answer is clear, what should parents do? Cellphones are a useful tool, but kids could limit their use. Make shorter calls. And remember that phones do emit radiation, so try to hold it a few centimetres from your head. Until we know more, a little bit of caution can't hurt anyone.

Wendy Mesley is a co-host of CBC News: Marketplace, Canada's award-winning consumer affairs show, and a regular back-up host with CBC News: The National. CBC News: Marketplace airs each Friday night at 8:30 p.m. (9 p.m. NT) on CBC Television.



Views

Halifax Regional Municipality, it's time to make a name change

UrbanCompass



paul.mcleod@metronews.ca

If you've ever travelled, been asked where you're from, and answered "I'm from Halifax," then you are a liar.

Like Santa Claus and Stephen Harper's soul, "Halifax" does not exist. Instead we live in the 12-syllabled linguistic atrocity known as Halifax Regional Municipality.

The moniker was initially an "interim" name made up by a bureaucrat during amalgamation in the 1990s. Council was supposed to pick a permanent name later.

Now, if you were born with an unfortunate name like

Ronald G. Fugglepants, you'd probably change it. Yet HRM never got around to doing that. The problem is councillors are notoriously territorial and couldn't agree.

We couldn't go with something simple like Halifax because some people in Dartmouth, Sackville, Bedford, etc. got all up in arms.

"I don't live in Halifax! I live in Dartmouth!" Coun. Gloria McCluskey belted out at one

council meeting.

Yeah, except Dartmouth is part of a larger thing and that needs a name, too. Every other large city has this issue, but they don't go around calling themselves Toronto Metropolitan Conglomerate, or London Interurban Megalopolis.

Calling it Halifax won't make Dartmouth, Sackville, et. al. disappear.

And Halifax is such a great name. Its soft consonants roll

off the tongue up until the jazzy twist ending of an x.

Nice. On the other hand, Halifax Regional Municipality sounds like the verbal equivalent of flushing a cat down a toilet.

To be fair, switching over has its downsides. The name change is estimated to cost a million dollars. That seems expensive, but think of it this way — the price would be spread out over several years,

and the longer we hold off, the pricier it will get.

So if we want to stick with this name forever then fine, let's all bask in our bureaucratic gibberish homeland. But if we want our city to some day have a respectable name, we should get on it sooner rather than later.

Paul McLeod is a staff reporter at Metro Halifax. He is currently in rehab for being a political junkie. It's going badly.

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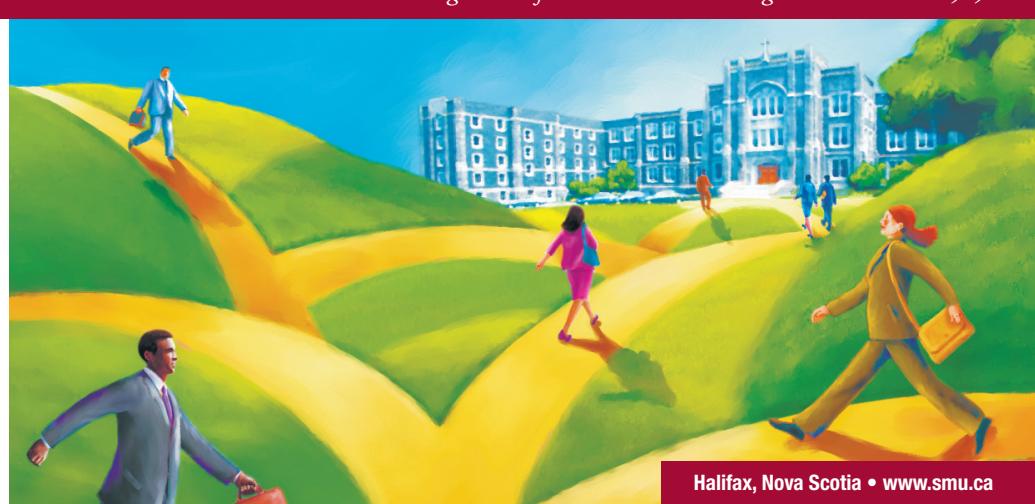
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Top European fashion houses Louis Vuitton and Hugo Boss said Christmas trading proved robust, sending a comforting message as the retail industry is hit by the worst downturn in decades. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Business

EDITOR: FERMIN DESOUZA, FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

In brief

RETAIL Canadian retail sales dropped by 2.4 per cent in November from October, the steepest decline in nearly 11 years, and analysts said they expected worse to come as the recession starts to bite harder.

JOB Microsoft Corp. stunned Wall Street with disappointing results that included plans to slash up to 5,000 jobs and a warning that revenue will almost certainly drop over the next two quarters. **REUTERS**

Swift recovery seen

The Canadian economy will contract by an exceptionally sharp 4.8 per cent in the first quarter of this year and continue to shrink through mid-year, but the recovery will be swifter than in the past two recessions, the Bank of Canada said Thursday.

Signalling the economy is now in the most dramatic part of the downturn,

Not as bad

- The Bank of Canada's projections of three quarters of recession this time contrasts with six quarters in 1981-82 and four quarters of contraction in the early 1990s.

the central bank said gross domestic product likely shrank by 2.3 per cent in

DOLLAR

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US\$	\$1.2537

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Analysts warn of drop in travel

VACATIONS Cracks are beginning to form in the packaged holiday industry.

Flight Centre spokesperson Allison Wallace said this month will be a litmus test when it comes to gauging the outlook for 2009.

"January is traditionally our busiest month for inquiries and bookings and we're up on last year," she said.

Analysts, however, say it's a matter of time before Canadians put the brakes on unnecessary travel.

The threat of slumping demand comes at a bad time for tour operators, which have collectively increased seats in the North American market by more than 15 per cent this winter.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

The DAILY BUSINESS BUZZ

New highway:

The Cape Breton Regional Municipality is looking at the merits of building a highway link from the Sydney coal piers to the regional airport that would open up 4,000 acres of land for development.

TCL appointment:

Fiona Kirkpatrick Parsons has been appointed communications manager of Trade Centre Limited.

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Hall of Fame Dallas Cowboys receiver Michael Irvin, right, is launching a reality TV show in which 12 "football neophytes" will compete for a spot on the Dallas Cowboys' training camp roster. The Cowboys confirmed that one of their 80 roster spots will go to the show's winner. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

13

Sports

JOHN.CHICK@METRONEWS.CA

MATTHEW WUEST
matthew.wuest@metronews.ca

Cam Russell has "the hammer" now, and it's up to him — and only him — how he wants to use it.

Russell, who last week added general manager to his title as head coach of the Halifax Mooseheads, has preached for more than two years his desire to ice a hard-working, blue-collar team that the Metro Centre crowd will appreciate.

While those traits escaped his teams in his first two seasons behind the bench, he hopes that changes for good now that he's taken over the GM duties from Marcel Patenaude.

"I'd like to think that if players know there's one guy that has the hammer,



"They've got to perform," Mooseheads GM/coach Cam Russell said of his players. "If they don't, there will be consequences."

they've got to perform," Russell said. "If they don't, there will be consequences. It makes it easier when there's one guy ap-

plying those consequences."

The Mooseheads, who host the Quebec Remparts Friday at 7 p.m. and visit



Venus bounced Down Under

Venus Williams was knocked out of the Australian Open on Thursday, stunned by Spanish player Carla Suarez Navarro in the second round. Suarez Navarro rallied from 5-2 down in the third and saved a match point before beating Williams 2-6, 6-3, 7-5. There was no upset of top seeds Daniel Nestor of Toronto and Nenad Zimonjic of Serbia in their first-round doubles match. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Koskie wants to make comeback with Team Canada

While several Canadians are either not able or not interested in playing for their country's team at the World Baseball Classic in March, there's one who's quietly been busting his guts for the chance to participate.

In fact, after more than two seasons of inactivity because of post-concussion syndrome, Manitoban **Corey Koskie** is desperately trying to crack Team Canada's roster for what very likely would be his last hurrah. Metro has learned the ex-Blue Jays third baseman has an agreement in writing

YorkReport
Marty York
marty.york@metronews.ca

with general manager **Greg Hamilton** that stipulates he'd be added to Team Canada's 45-man, preliminary roster if he is deemed physically fit by Feb. 1.

"My wife and I have talked lots about this," Koskie confirmed in an interview, "and we've agreed that (playing for Canada) would be a great way to retire." Koskie, 35,

said he has been working out diligently for months and has received permission from the Minnesota Twins to train at their camp in Fort Myers, Fla., in February if he gets the green light from Team Canada.

Koskie starred for the Twins from 1998 through 2004. He was the Jays' marquee free-agent acquisition for 2005 but struggled with injuries and was dealt to Milwaukee after the season. Concussions sidelined him while with the Brewers in 2006 and he had to sit out 2007 and 2008.

Should Koskie crack Team Canada's final, 28-man roster, he'd unlikely play much.

Manager Ernie Whitt plans to start the Kansas City Royals' **Mark Teahen** at third base, the Houston Astros' **Chris Barnwell** at shortstop, the Washington Nationals' **Peter Orr** at second and Minnesota's **Justin Morneau** at first.

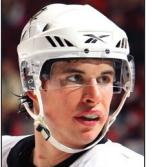
- **Doug Berry**, who coached the Blue Bombers to the Grey Cup game in 2007 and was fired by Winnipeg after the 2008 season, is desperately seeking work after the Toronto Argonauts rejected his applications to become their head or assistant coach. Look for the Argos to acquire quarterback **Kevin Glenn**, at least as a backup to **Kerry Joseph**, now

that new Winnipeg coach **Mike Kelly** intends to trade the veteran ... Despite efforts by Argos co-owner **David Cynamon** to downplay it, **Michael (Pinball) Clemons** is indeed out as the club's chief shot-caller — as reported here Tuesday — and will take a significant pay cut to stay on in an ambassador role ... The Hamilton Tiger-Cats, meanwhile, have told QB **Casey Printers** he's not welcome back unless he accepts a pay cut that would reduce his \$450,000-a-year salary to less than \$200,000.

Marty York has been a groundbreaking sports columnist and broadcaster in Canada for decades.

Crosby out of All-Star Game

NHL Pittsburgh Penguins captain Sidney Crosby of Cole Harbour has withdrawn from



Sidney Crosby

Sunday's NHL all-star game in Montreal because of injury, and Tampa Bay's Martin St. Louis will take his spot on the Eastern Conference roster. Crosby has been battling a knee injury, which forced him to miss last Friday's game against Anaheim. He returned to the ice for Pittsburgh's final two games before the all-star break, but will miss the event for the second consecutive year. Crosby did not play in last year's event because of a high ankle sprain.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

SCOREBOARD

QMJHL

THURSDAY'S RESULTS
Drummondville 4 Montreal 1
Shawinigan 8 Victoriaville 3

FRIDAY'S GAMES

Quebec at **HALIFAX**
Saint John at Cape Breton
Val-d'Or at Lewiston
Baie-Comeau at P.E.I.
Drummondville at Chicoutimi
Rouyn-Noranda at Gatineau
Acadie-Bathurst at Rimouski
Shawinigan at Victoriaville

SATURDAY'S GAMES

Montreal at Lewiston
Quebec at Moncton
Baie-Comeau at P.E.I.

SUNDAY'S GAMES

HALIFAX at Cape Breton
Val-d'Or at Gatineau
Baie-Comeau at Moncton
Rouyn-Noranda at Rimouski
Quebec at Saint John
Victoriaville at Drummondville

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Dartmouth snowboarder Sarah Conrad just missed advancing in the half-pipe event at the FIS world championships in Sungwoo, Korea, yesterday. The 23-year-old placed seventh with 34.0 points on her second run. The 2004 Olympian fell 0.9 points shy of the top-five spot she needed to advance. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Conrad comes up short

Strickland lays claim to Jay-Z shoutout

Rainmen forward/Jiggaman pal says you never know ... he may show up in Halifax one day

MATTHEW WUEST
matthew.wuest@metronews.ca

Jay-Z, courtside, at a Halifax Rainmen game? You never know, now that John Strickland is in town.

"I've known Jay-Z for 12, 13 years, back when rapin' wasn't his first forte," says Strickland with a sly grin.

Strickland, a 6-8 power forward from Manhattan, professes to be friends with the international rap star. He says he attended the wedding of Jay-Z and Beyoncé Knowles last April; he spent the past two New Year's Eves with him; and he is even mentioned in a couple of his songs.

"My homey Strick told me, 'Dude finish your breakfast,'" Jay-Z raps, early in Public Service Announcement off his 2003 The Black

Album. "So that's what I'm do."

The 38-year-old won't say how he first met Jay-Z — "That's a long story that I don't want to get into," he laughs — but says the lyric stems from a street-ball game in 2003.

Strickland, who earned the nickname "The Franchise" during his heyday at Harlem's legendary Rucker

Park, was playing on a team assembled by Jay-Z in a summer tournament.

The story goes, he told teammate Jamal Crawford to "finish your breakfast" after the NBA star missed a wide-open layup.

"I'm a slick-talkin' dude from New York," Strickland says. "Two nights later, Jay-Z calls me down to the studio ... He says, 'Yo Strick, you just made the album.'"

Could he get Jay-Z to Halifax for a game?

"That'll be

"My homey Strick told me, 'Dude finish your breakfast.'"

From Public Service Announcement on Jay-Z's 2003 The Black Album, a reference Strickland says is about him.

tough, but I could try to do somethin' if we get to a championship," Strickland says.

Strickland is a minor-league journeyman who has made more than 40

stops since playing his last college game in 1995. He attended a New York Knicks' training camp in 1996 and played in the NBA D-League; he has been street-ball teammates with NBAers Richard Jefferson and Kenyon Martin; and he claims to have talked trash

with Shaquille O'Neal at Rucker Park.

Strickland calls himself a "crafty veteran," and the Rainmen expect him to shore up their defence and rebounding. But fans may be

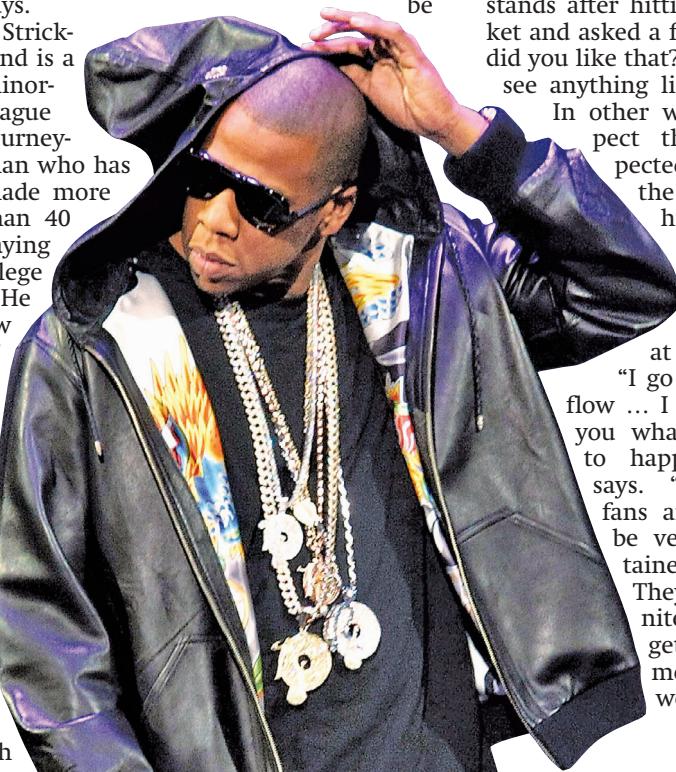
more intrigued by the former Harlem Globetrotter's reputation for unpredictable on-court antics.

He says he's pulled out a cellphone in a game and even jumped into the stands after hitting a basket and asked a fan, "How did you like that? You ever see anything like that?"

In other words, expect the unexpected when the Rainmen host the Buffalo Stampedes on Sunday at 4 p.m.

"I go with the flow ... I can't tell you what's going to happen," he says. "But the fans are gonna be very entertained.

They're definitely gonna get their money's worth."



Rainmen dealing with new PBL playoff format

MATTHEW WUEST
matthew.wuest@metronews.ca

The Halifax Rainmen will have their hands full if they want to make the Premier Basketball League playoffs.

Only four teams qualify for the PBL post-season, with three conference winners gaining automatic entry.

The top two remaining finishers in the overall standings will have a one-game showdown to decide a fourth wildcard team.

The four teams will play off in best-of-three semifinals, with two games hosted by the higher seed. The championship series will also be a best-of-three, but the league has not yet determined whether it will be hosted by the participating teams or a neutral site.

PBL commissioner Tom

Doyle said he will give "fair consideration" to three formal neutral site bids he has received to host the championship series.

The Rainmen have also talked to the league about hosting it, Doyle said.

"Our preference is to stick with a PBL home court," Doyle said.

A decision is expected in the next week to 10 days. The PBL also does not have plans to hold an all-star game.

The Rainmen, 3-3, have lost three straight games, slipping behind the Vermont Frost Heaves and Manchester Millrats in the Atlantic Division standings.

They play on the road Saturday at 8 p.m. against the Buffalo Stampedes (1-3) and return home Sunday for a 4 p.m. rematch with the Stampedes at the Metro Centre.

Huskies stay hot on the road

AUS The Saint Mary's Huskies men's basketball team won its fourth straight game and sixth of seven in Wolfville last night. The Huskies squeaked past the host Acadia Axemen 82-80 to improve to 8-3 and take sole possession of second place in Atlantic University Sport. First-year point guard Joey Haywood contributed 24 points, six steals, six assists and six rebounds for the Huskies, while Mark McLaughlin added 18 points.

Arsenault, McConnery tied

CURLING Mayflower's Mary Anne Arsenault and Dartmouth's Nancy McConnery are tied atop the standings at the Scotiabank Tournament of Hearts. Arsenault went 1-1 on Day 2 of the provincial women's curling championship yesterday, losing to clubmate Sarah Rhyno in the afternoon and beating Truro's Colleen Pinkney in the evening. McConnery earned a pair of wins, topping a couple of Mayflower skips, Margaret Cutcliffe in the afternoon and Jill Mouzar in the evening.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

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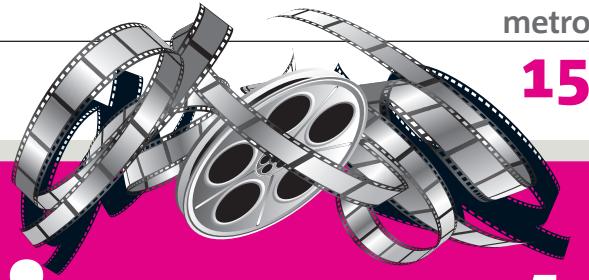
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Movies & Entertainment

EDITOR: DEAN LISK, DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA

Movies

Button tops Oscar noms

Pg 16



The Curious Case of Benjamin Button was the big leader at the announcement of this year's Academy Awards, receiving 13 nominations — including best picture, best actor and best adapted screenplay.

movies

Pg 18



Inkheart's screen adaptation pales in comparison to novel

music

Pg 20



New Pornographers frontman goes solo

7th heaven

Pg 24



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16 movies & entertainment

Underworld: Rise of The Lycans opens in theatres this Friday. As there were no press previews, there will be a review of the film in Monday's edition of Metro.

Movies

★★★★ A CLASSIC; ★★★ EXCELLENT; ★★ GOOD; ★ FAIR; ★ POOR

Talking Oscars

What the stars are saying about their Academy nominations:



"This is a great honor for the movie, and I'm especially happy for David Fincher, for without him there would be no Ben Button."

— BRAD PITT, BEST ACTOR, THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON
PARAMOUNT STATEMENT

"My wife (Diane Lane) called me. It's her birthday and she said, 'It's the best present I could have gotten.' She sung me a happy nomination birthday song."

— JOSH BROLIN, BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR, MILK
PEOPLES.COM

"Working with Clint Eastwood was a reward in itself that will last me a lifetime. It has been an exceptional year for acting, and I am honoured to be in the company of these talented actors whose performances all deserve this recognition."

Angelina Jolie

— ANGELINA JOLIE,
BEST ACTRESS
USWEEKLY.COM

"It is such a thrill to be recognized in this category with these remarkably talented women. I was with my parents and my dog when I got the news and we were all overjoyed — although I'm not sure my dog knew what was going on. This is a great day to be an actress!"

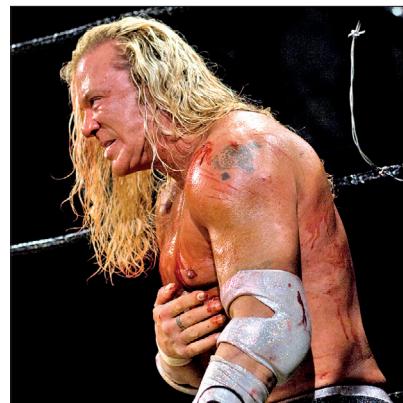
— ANNE HATHAWAY, BEST ACTRESS,
RACHEL GETTING MARRIED
PEOPLES.COM



"I'm extremely happy to have been nominated. And very fortunate. Playing Hanna Schmitz

will always remain one of the biggest challenges I've ever been blessed with."

— KATE WINSLET,
BEST ACTRESS, THE READER
PEOPLES.COM



(Clockwise from left) Slumdog Millionaire received 10 nominations, including best picture; Gus van Sant's Milk picked up some major nominations, including best actor for Sean Penn. Anne Hathaway got a best actress nod for Rachel Getting Married; Mickey Rourke was nominated for The Wrestler; and Waltz With Bashir picked up a nomination for best foreign film.

The race begins

Button, Slumdog lead Oscar nominations

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button, a drama in which Brad Pitt plays a man who ages backward, led the field of Oscar contenders with 13 nominations, organizers said Thursday.

Slumdog Millionaire, the tale of an impoverished orphan's improbable victory on an Indian television game show, followed with 10, while the Batman sequel *The Dark Knight* and the gay-rights saga *Milk* each landed eight.

Benjamin Button, Slumdog Millionaire and *Milk* will vie for best picture at the 81st annual Academy Awards, alongside *The Reader* and *Frost/Nixon*. All five also had best director nominations.

Clint Eastwood's recent box office champ *Gran Torino* was notably snubbed, with no nominations.

As expected, late Australian actor Heath Ledger was nominated for his supporting role as the villainous Joker in *The Dark Knight*.

The Dark Knight, the biggest box office smash since *Titanic* in 1997, had been seen as having an outside shot at a best picture slot but all of its other nominations ended up be-

ing in technical categories.

With 13 nominations, Benjamin Button falls one short of the record shared by *All About Eve* (1959) and *Titanic*. Its nominations included best actor for Pitt, best director for David Fincher, best supporting actress for Taraji P. Henson and best adapted screenplay for Eric Roth and Robin Swicord.

Loosely based on a short story by F. Scott Fitzgerald, Benjamin Button has been a commercial and critical success, and will likely combine with *The Dark Knight* to boost the

The 81st Annual Academy Awards

Oscar's ratings.

In recent years, Academy voters have favored smaller, arthouse pictures and TV viewers stayed away in droves.

"It is a good across-the-board look at movies of the past year," said Sid Ganis, president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. "I like the list because it is somewhat not as predicted. It goes from little old

Slumdog to big Benjamin Button."

Meryl Streep, 59, already the all-time acting Oscar record holder with 14 nominations, landed her 15th for her lead role in *Doubt*, in which she plays a vindictive nun.

Other leading films included the animated feature *WALL-E* with six nominations and *Doubt*, *Frost/Nixon* and *The Reader* with five each.

The Oscars will be presented Feb. 22 at the Kodak Theater in Hollywood. Australian actor Hugh Jackman will host. **REUTERS**

Ledger's Joker strikes again

NOMINATION Heath Ledger's action movie villain The Joker is getting the last laugh over Hollywood. The Australian actor's best supporting actor Oscar nomination Thursday came exactly a year after he died of an accidental prescription-drug overdose and was a rare exception



to the rule that Oscar voters overlook action hero movies.

Not only did Ledger help the Batman sequel *The Dark Knight* become the biggest movie since *Titanic*, but he also picked up a slew of awards for his chilling but compelling

role as The Joker.

Thursday's Oscar nomination put Ledger in line for only the second posthumous Academy Award to be handed out to an actor. Peter Finch won for 1976's *Network* about two months after he suffered a fatal heart attack, aged 60.

"Oscar voters are notorious snobs who turn up their noses at superhero movies. This may be popcorn, but it is gourmet popcorn," said Tom O'Neil, a movie columnist.

REUTERS

List of nominees

Best Picture

- *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*; *Frost/Nixon*; *Milk*; *The Reader*; *Slumdog Millionaire*.

Best Actor

- Richard Jenkins - *The Visitor*; Frank Langella - *Frost/Nixon*; Sean Penn - *Milk*; Brad Pitt - *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*; Mickey Rourke - *The Wrestler*.

Best Actress

- Anne Hathaway - *Rachel Getting Married*; Angelina Jolie - *Changeling*; Melissa Leo - *Frozen River*; Meryl Streep - *Doubt*; Kate Winslet - *The Reader*.

Best Supporting Actor

- Josh Brolin - *Milk*; Robert Downey Jr. - *Tropic Thunder*; Philip Seymour Hoffman - *Doubt*; Heath Ledger - *The Dark Knight*; Michael Shannon - *Revolutionary Road*

Best Supporting Actress

- Amy Adams - *Doubt*; Penelope Cruz - *Vicky Cristina Barcelona*; Viola Davis - *Doubt*; Taraji P. Henson - *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*; Marisa Tomei - *The Wrestler*.

Best Director

- David Fincher - *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*; Ron Howard - *Frost/Nixon*; Gus Van Sant - *Milk*; Stephen Daldry - *The Reader*; Danny Boyle - *Slumdog Millionaire*

Best Animated Feature

- *Bolt*; *Kung-Fu Panda*; *WALL-E*.

Best Foreign Language Film

- *The Baader Meinhof Complex* - Germany; *The Class* - France; *Departures* - Japan; *Revanche* - Austria; *Waltz with Bashir* - Israel

Best Foreign Language Film

- *The Baader Meinhof Complex* - Germany; *The Class* - France; *Departures* - Japan; *Revanche* - Austria; *Waltz with Bashir* - Israel

Best Adapted Screenplay

- Eric Roth and Robin Swicord, *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*; John Patrick Shanley, *Doubt*; Peter Morgan, *Frost/Nixon*; David Hare, *The Reader*; Simon Beaufoy, *Slumdog Millionaire*.

Best Original Screenplay

- Courtney Hunt, *Frozen River*; Mike Leigh, *Happy-Go-Lucky*; Martin McDonagh, *In Bruges*; Dustin Lance Black, *Milk*; Andrew Stanton, Jim Reardon and Pete Docter, *WALL-E*.

Original Score

- The Curious Case of Benjamin Button, Alexandre Desplat; *Defiance*, James Newton Howard; *Milk*, Danny Elfman; *Slumdog Millionaire*, A.R. Rahman; *WALL-E*, Thomas Newman.

- More nominees at metronews.ca

Correction

The *Uninvited* opens in theatres across Canada on Jan. 30, not this Friday. An incorrect date appeared in Wednesday's issue of Metro.

Reel Time

●●●● A CLASSIC; ●●●● EXCELLENT; ●●● GOOD; ●● FAIR; ● POOR

Dull side of domestic hell

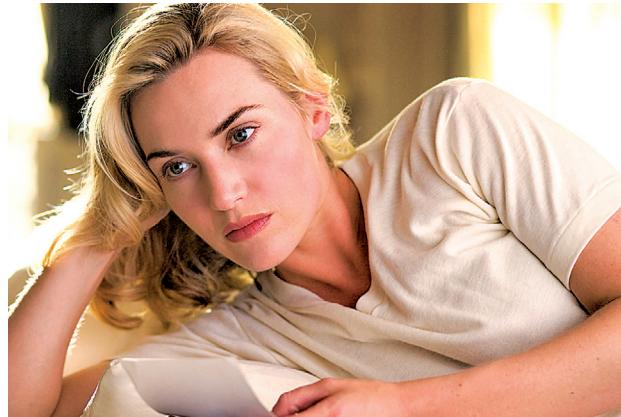
Revolutionary Road

Director: Sam Mendes
Stars: Kate Winslet, Leonardo DiCaprio
Classification: 14A
Rating: ●½

CHRIS ALEXANDER
for Metro Canada

Christmas may be over but holiday turkey can still be savoured in Revolutionary Road, the latest overstuffed and undercooked exercise in empty, posturing theatics from director Sam Mendes.

Based on the book by Richard Yates, the film reunites *Titanic* co-stars Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet as Frank and April Wheeler, a young couple trapped in '50s domestic hell, and mines the same bitter but tired "suburban life sucks" territory Mendes covered in his considerably more amusing — but woes-



Kate Winslet reunites with her *Titanic* co-star Leonardo DiCaprio in *Revolutionary Road*.

fully overrated — Oscar-winning satire *American Beauty*. This one sports half of *Beauty*'s laughs and twice its pretensions and is ultimately duller than a sink full of day-old dishwater.

The picture starts promisingly enough with a clever pre-credits montage that brilliantly sets up the couple's sweaty-palmed courtship, but it goes nowhere slowly, looking pretty (the gauzy cinematography by Roger Deakins is a

major asset) while not registering on any emotional level whatsoever.

And for all the endless dramatic fireworks (DiCaprio and Winslet are excellent actors but are like Oscar-baiting gunslingers at a shooting gallery here) we never get to really know or care about Frank and April, thus the big, already controversial climax feels both condescending and utterly hollow.

As dire as *Revolutionary Road* is, it's almost worth

Frost/Nixon taut drama

Frost/Nixon

Director: Ron Howard
Stars: Frank Langella, Michael Sheen
Classification: PG
Rating: ●●●●

STEVE GOW
for Metro Canada

REVIEW It certainly isn't a given that the play *Frost/Nixon* would make a great movie.

After all, not only is it about Richard Nixon — one of America's least popular presidents — but it's based on a series of simple TV interviews from the 1970s.

Not exactly the stuff of cinematic awe.

When director Ron Howard (*A Beautiful Mind*) decided to tackle this adaptation however, he was brilliant enough to cast the same acclaimed duo that carried the play on Broadway. As such, the film features some of the year's greatest performances.

In the film, David Frost (Michael Sheen of *The Queen*) is a flashy English TV host who craves success in the States. Shortly after Nixon (Frank Langella) resigns following the Watergate scandal, Frost gambles his career on a series of interviews with the former president.

As you may suspect, *Frost/Nixon* is extremely weighty in wordiness, but it's so tautly written that even the most antsy audience member will be riveted. Layered with subtext that reveals a fascinating glimpse into two opposing personalities, *Frost/Nixon* is only enhanced by its unexpected relevance.

More than anything, *Frost/Nixon* will be appreciated for its dazzling performances.

While it will surely show Sheen the golden-paved road to stardom, it proves a captivating climax to the underappreciated career of veteran Frank Langella.

As it happens, life truly does imitate art.

"FOUR PAWS UP!"

KCLV-TV (LAS VEGAS) JEFFREY K. HOWARD

The New York Times

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— Karen Durbin, ELLE MAGAZINE



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— Russ Simmons, FOX-TV

"A fast-moving action adventure."

— Jeffrey Lyons, NBC/LYONS & BAILES REEL TALK

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Reel Time

●●●● A CLASSIC; ●●●● EXCELLENT; ●●● GOOD; ●● FAIR; ● POOR

Saving Brendan Fraser

InFocus

Richard Crouse

Critics used to love Brendan Fraser. Early on Roger Ebert called him "subtle and attuned" and Barbara Ellen in The Times raved that he was "a revelation — so measured, suave and intrinsically watchable."

That was then. This is now.

Lately the tone of his reviews has taken a turn. "Noticeably uninvolved" and "worn out" are just two descriptions of his current work in movies like *The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor*. One blogger even wrote, with simple hateful eloquence, "His face makes me angry."



I thought of this as I watched *Inkheart*. A big budget fantasy adventure, it encapsulates everything that's wrong with Fraser's career. It's another forgettable performance in an unremarkable movie that allows the premise and the CGI to overshadow everything else. According to avclub.com, in recent years this guy has spent so much time in front of a green screen "his children probably have traces of CGI in their DNA."

films.

For example, in *Gods and Monsters* Fraser played Clay Boone, a young straight ex-Marine who forms a bond with James Whale, the elderly gay director of *Frankenstein* played by Ian McKellen. Fraser's take on Clay is complicated but sympathetic as he forms a platonic relationship with the older man who becomes the father figure he never had. In this film Fraser

holds his own against the masterful McKellen.

The Quiet American sees Fraser as Alden Pyle, an idealist who must learn to deal with moral ambiguity. Again his work is well crafted and thoughtful.

Further acting high points include the image obsessed district attorney in *Crash*; and *Journey to the End of Night*'s Paul, a degenerate gambler who double-crosses his father and tries to run off with the cash.

Not since Orson Welles voiced commercials for a frozen pea company has one actor squandered his talent so flagrantly, so let's remember Fraser for the good ones — the ones listed above as well as 1997's *Still Breathing* — and hope that he gets over his green screen addiction sooner rather than later.

Richard Crouse is the author of *Son of the 100 Best Movies You've Never Seen* and film critic for CTV's Canada AM.

Inkheart better on page

Inkheart

Director: Iain Softley

Stars: Brendan Fraser

Classification: STC

Rating: ●●½

STEVE GOW
for Metro Canada

On the web

- To see an *Inkheart* trailer, and screen times, visit metronews.ca/movies

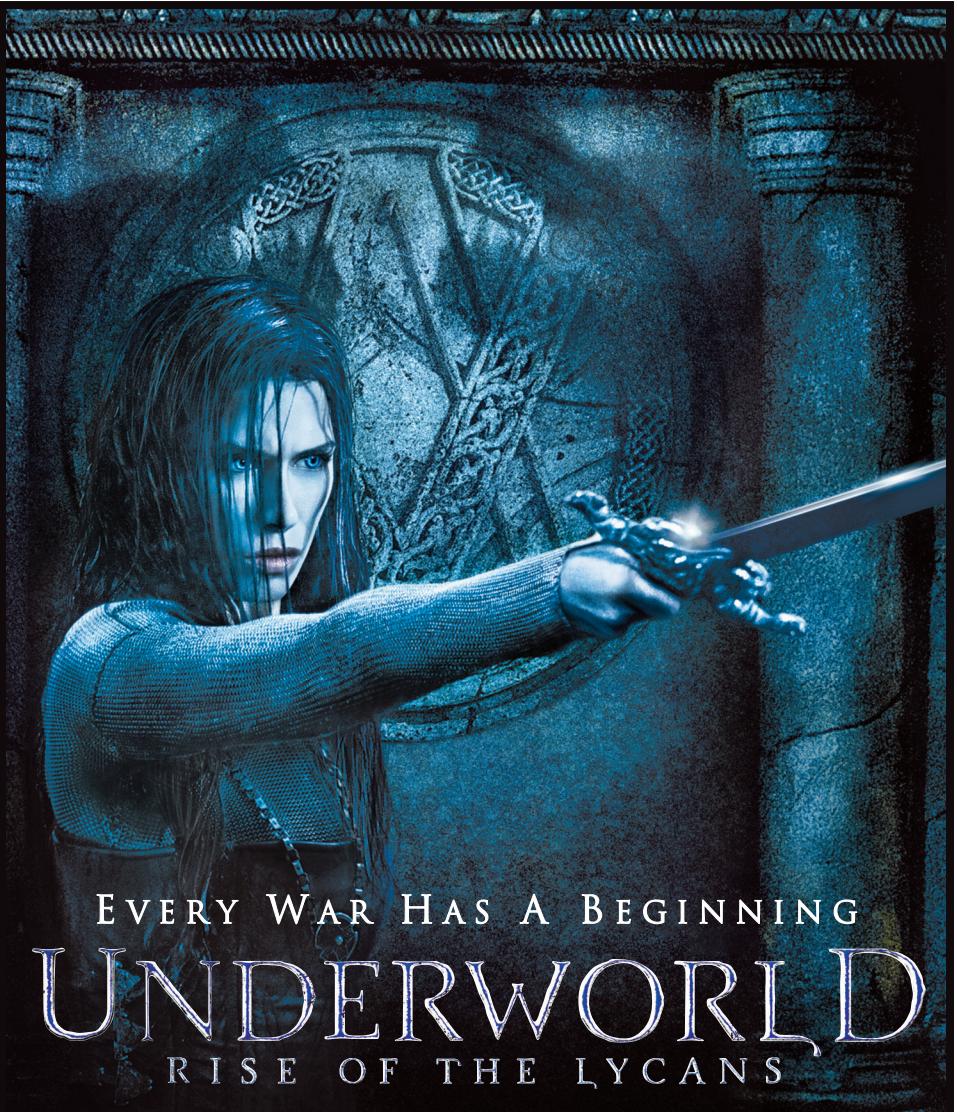
is traded in reciprocation — namely, his wife.

Now, a decade later, the only way to rescue her is to find a copy of *Inkheart* and read her back out of the novel.

Along the way, Folchart and his daughter (Eliza Bennett) meet a dizzying array of characters including the book's desperate hero (Paul Bettany), a conspiring antagonist called Capricorn as well as flying monkeys, a unicorn, Rapunzel and Toto from *The Wizard of Oz*.

While director Iain Softley is able to engage with big epic stunts and grand effects, *Inkheart* ironically loses its audience with a convoluted story that never fully satisfies many of its own questions. The notion of swapping real folks with characters in a book is intriguing, but the film never fully gives it reason.

#1 MOVIE IN CANADA!



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STARTS TODAY

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This week's new releases are highlighted in pink.

THESE PAGES COVER MOVIE START TIMES FROM FRI., JAN. 23 TO THURS., JAN. 29. TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. COMPLETE LISTINGS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE AT METRONEWS.CA/MOVIES.

HALIFAX

BAYERS LAKE
190 Chain Lake Dr., Bayers Lake
902-876-4800

Bedtime Stories (G) Dolby Stereo Fri-Thu 1:05-3:50-7

Bride Wars (PG) Stadium Seating, Dolby Stereo Fri-Thu 1:30-4:20-7:25-9:50

Chandni Chowk to China (STC) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 12:20-3:25-6:30-9:40

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button (PG) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 12:45-4:30-8:15

Defiance (14) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 12:40-3:40-6:40-9:40

Gran Torino (14) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 12:50-3:45-6:45-9:40

Hotel for Dogs (G) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Sat 1:05-3:55-6:40-9:20 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Sun 1:05-3:55 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Mon-Tue 1:05-3:55-6:40-9:20 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Wed 1:05-3:55-9:30 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Thu 1:05-3:55-6:40-9:20

Inkheart (STC) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Tue 12:50-3:35-6:55-9:30 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Wed 1:15-3:35-6:55-9:30 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Thu 12:50-3:35-6:55-9:30

Last Chance Harvey (PG) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 12:40-3:35-6:55-9:30

Marley & Me (PG) Dolby Stereo Fri-Tue 12:50-6:40 Dolby Stereo Wed 12:50-9:40 Dolby Stereo Thu 12:50-6:40

My Bloody Valentine (18) Dolby Stereo Fri-Thu 3:40-7:15-10

Notorious (18) Dolby Stereo Fri-Thu 1:15-4:10-7:10-10

Paul Blart: Mall Cop (PG) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 12:55-4:7-10:45

Revolutionary Road (14) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 1:05-4:15-6:55-9:30

Slumdog Millionaire (STC) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 1:05-4:10-7:55

The Tale of Despereaux (G) Dolby Stereo Fri-Thu 12:45

Twilight (PG) Dolby Stereo Fri-Thu 9:40

The Unborn (14) Dolby Stereo Fri-Tue 4:05-9:50 Dolby Stereo Wed 4:05-7:20 Dolby Stereo Thu 4:05-9:50

Underworld: Rise of the Lycans (STC) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Tue 12:45-3:45-7:20-10:05 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Wed 1:20-3:45-7:20-10:05 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Thu 12:45-3:45-7:20-10:05

The Wrestler (14) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 1:20-4:30-7:15-9:55

WWE: Royal Rumble (STC) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Sun 9

IMAX
190 Chain Lake Dr., Bayers Lake
902-876-4800

The Dark Knight: The IMAX Experience (PG) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 2-6:30

The Day the Earth Stood Still: The IMAX Experience (PG) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 9:40

OXFORD THEATRE
6408 Quinpool Rd.
902-423-7488

Slumdog Millionaire (STC) Fri 6:30-9:30 Sat-Sun 2-6:30-9:30 Mon-Thu 6:30-9:15

PARK LANE
5657 Spring Garden Rd.
902-423-4860

Bride Wars (PG) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Sun 1:20-3:45-7:20-9:45 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 3:45-7:20-9:45

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button (PG) Stadium Seating Fri 12:20-3:50-7:30 Stadium Seating Sat 7:30 Stadium Seating Sun 12:20-3:50-7:30 Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 3:50-7:30

Frost/Nixon (STC) Stadium Seating Fri-Sun 12:40-3:20-6:30-9:20 Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 3:20-6:30-9:20

The Godfather (STC) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri 11:30

Gran Torino (14) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Sun 1:4-6:40-9:25 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 4:40-6:40-9:25

Metropolitan Opera: Orfeo ed Euridice Live (NCM Event) (STC) Stadium Seating Sat 2

Paul Blart: Mall Cop (PG) Stadium



Christian Bale stars in *The Dark Knight*, which is currently in theatres.

Seating Fri-Sun 1:30-4:10-7:10-9:30 Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 4:10-7:10-9:30

The Reader (STC) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri 12:30-3:10-6:20-9 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Sat 6:20-9 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Sun 12:30-3:10-6:20-9 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Mon 3:10-9:20 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Tue-Wed 3:10-6:20-9 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Thu 3:10-6:20-9

Underworld: Rise of the Lycans (STC) Stadium Seating Fri-Sun 1:10-3:40-6:50-9:10 Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 3:40-6:50-9:10

The Unborn (14) Dolby Stereo Fri 6:45-8:55 Dolby Stereo Sat-Sun 2:50-6:45-8:55 Dolby Stereo Mon-Thu 6:45-8:55

The Wrestler (14) Stadium Seating Fri-Sun 12:50-3:30-7:9:40 Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 3:30-7:9:40

LOWER SACKVILLE

LOWER SACKVILLE
760 Sackville Dr., Downsview Plaza
902-869-2022

Bedtime Stories (G) Stadium Seating Sat-Sun 12:30-3

Gran Torino (14) Stadium Seating Fri 6:30-9:30 Stadium Seating Sat-Sun 1:30-50-6:30-9 Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 6:30-9

Hotel for Dogs (G) Stadium Seating Fri 6:40-9 Stadium Seating Sat-Sun 12:45-3:10-6:40-9 Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 6:40-9

Inkheart (STC) Stadium Seating Fri 6:50-9:25 Stadium Seating Sat-Sun 12:45-3:20-6:50-9:20 Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 6:50-9:20

Marley & Me (PG) Stadium Seating Sat-Sun 12:40-3:15

Notorious (18) Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 6:45-9:20

Paul Blart: Mall Cop (PG) Stadium Seating Fri 7:10-9:10 Stadium Seating Sat-Sun 2-7:10-9:10

Slumdog Millionaire (STC) Stadium Seating Fri-Sun 1:10-3:30-7:9:10 Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 7:9:10

The Unborn (14) Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 7:15-9:25

Underworld: Rise of the Lycans (STC) Stadium Seating Fri 7:10-9:30 Stadium Seating Sat-Sun 1:15-3:45-7:10-9:30 Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 7:10-9:30

Metropolitan Opera: Orfeo ed Euridice Live (STC) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Sat 2

My Bloody Valentine 3D (18) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Wed 12:40-3:40-6:40-9:30 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Thu 12:40-3:40-6:40-9:30

Notorious (18) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 1:05-4:6-45-9:50

Paul Blart: Mall Cop (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 1:40-20-7:15-9:45 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Sat 2-20-6:35-9:15 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Sun 1:40-4:20 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 1:40-20-7:15-9:45

Revolutionary Road (14) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 1:40-20-7:15-9:45

Slumdog Millionaire (STC) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Sun 1:40-4:20 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 7:40-9:40

Underworld: Rise of the Lycans (STC) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 1:35-7:9:25

WWE: Royal Rumble (STC) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Sun 9

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Fri 7:30 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Sat 2-7:30 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Sun 7:30 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 4:40-6:40-9:25

Metropolitan Opera: Orfeo ed Euridice Live NCM Event (STC) Stadium Seating Sat 2

Paul Blart: Mall Cop (PG) Stadium

TRURO

TRURO
20 Treaty Trail, Millbrook

902-895-8020

Bedtime Stories (G) Stadium Seating Sat-Sun 2:10

Doubt (PG) Stadium Seating Fri 7:10-9:20

902-895-8020

Bedtime Stories (G) Stadium Seating Sat-Sun 2:10

Doubt (PG) Stadium Seating Fri 7:10-9:20

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Bedtime Stories (G) Stadium Seating Sat-Sun 2:10

Doubt (PG) Stadium Seating Fri 7:10-9:20

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The bestselling albums at Amazon.ca
 1. Performing This Week ... Live At Ronnie Scott's, Jeff Beck, right; 2. Slumdog Millionaire, Original Soundtrack;
 3. Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog, Various; 4. Fleet Foxes, Fleet Foxes; 5. Hit Man: Various. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Music

A.C. Newman guilty as charged

The New Pornographers frontman turns up the volume on his new solo album

BRYAN BORZYKOWSKI
for Metro Canada

Don't worry if A.C. Newman's solo career confuses you. Usually, when a frontman for a successful band — in this case Vancouver's The New Pornographers — releases a solo album, it often sounds much different from the guy's day job. But not so with Newman, whose rich, Beach Boys-like pop stylings appears on everything he touches. Plus, to him, every record he releases comes from the same place.

"I think Get Guilty is a louder record than Chal-

lengers is," says Newman, comparing his latest solo effort to his last New Pornographers record. "I think I'm always trying to change it up, it doesn't matter whether it's a Pornographers album or not."

Clearly, he doesn't view his New Pornographers-self as separate from his solo career. And, while Neko Case and Dan Bejar aren't singing on Get Guilty — Newman's second album sans supergroup — it's still got the same harmony laden tracks and sunny upbeat vibe that's made the now New York-based songwriter's band what it is.

So, if his own material isn't that different from his

band's music, why put out a solo album at all? "There is no really good reason for it," he says. "I just do it because I can."

Newman points out that he wrote his first album — 2004's Slow Wonder — after thinking The New Pornographers were breaking up. Neko Case decided to embark on her own solo career, which meant his band wasn't touring. Instead of waiting around, he recorded Slow Wonder during the time off.

This time, however, Get Guilty, was written so he could "record the next New Pornographers record with a clean start in my head.

"I wrote it as kind of a



A.C. Newman, frontman for The New Pornographers, has released a new solo album.

palate cleaning," he explains further. "It's hard to describe, but for some reason, at the end of making Challengers, I decided I was going to write a solo record. There's one song on the disc that I started writing while the Pornographers were mixing. I left the studio and played it into my phone."

As he's talking Newman, again, wonders aloud why he decided to record another solo album, as if he just realized that it's somewhat redundant. "There's not really any logic to this," he remarks. "I guess it seemed

too soon to do another Pornos record."

But, logically, it did make more sense for him to create a non-NP album, considering who else is releasing a record this year.

"I wanted to make sure the Pornos and Neko don't put out records near each other," he says. "If this had been a Pornographers record it would have been out in January and Neko's record would have been out two months later. She can feel free to stomp all over my solo album, but the Pornos and Neko shouldn't conflict with each other."

TOP 10 MOBILE DOWNLOADS

1. Heartless Kanye West
2. Poker Face Lady GaGa
3. I'm So Proud Akon
4. Live Your Life T.I. ft. Rihanna
5. Right Now Akon
6. Single Ladies Beyoncé
7. Love Story Taylor Swift
8. Hot N Cold Katy Perry
9. Rock N' Roll Train AC/DC
10. Circus Britney Spears

rogers.com/musicstore



Metro recommends

• NOTORIOUS, ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK:

Biggie-sized soundtrack features classic tracks, a duet with his son, a tribute from Jay-Z and early demos.



• A.C. NEWMAN, GET GUILTY:

New Pornographers frontman explores the more elaborate facets of his power pop sound with tinges of psychedelia.

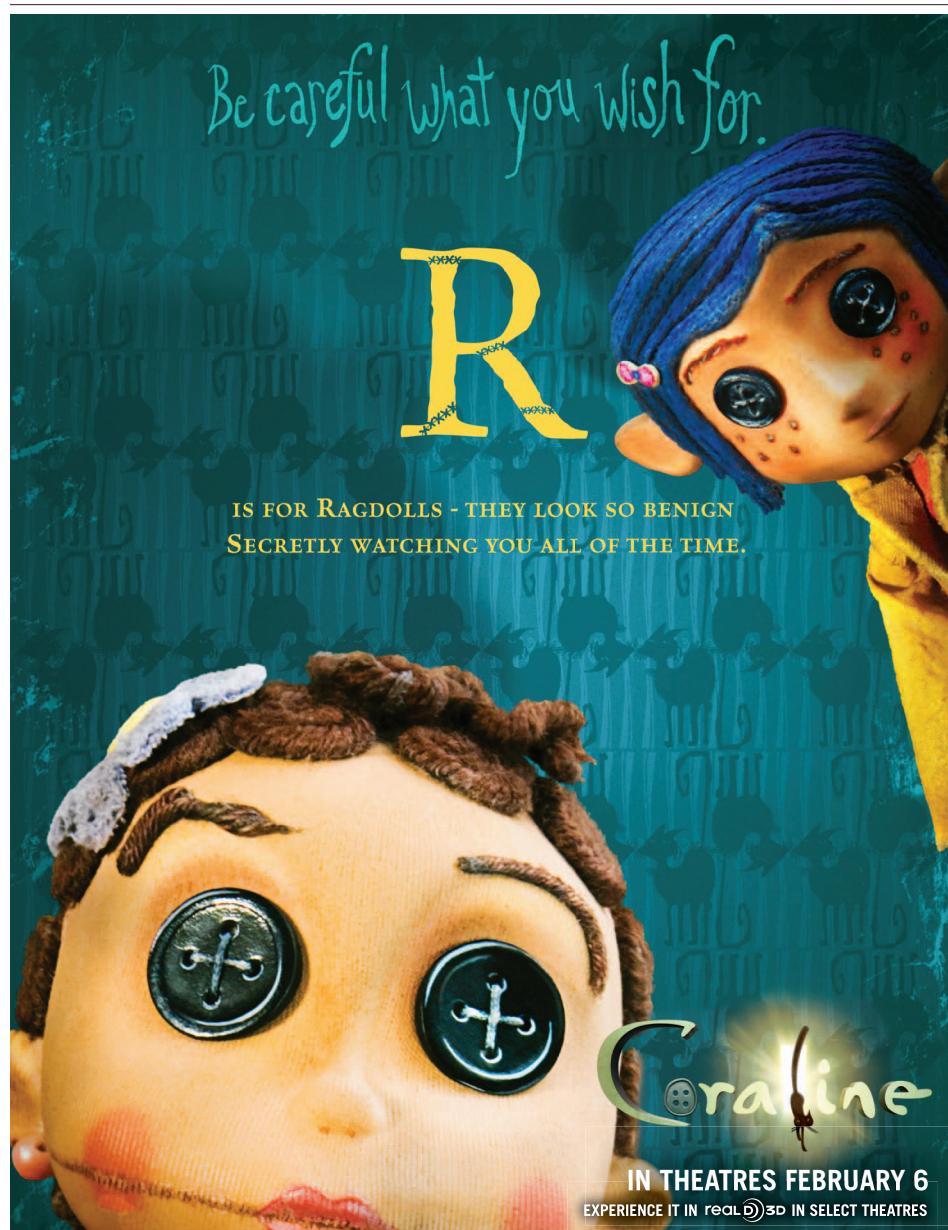


• KETCH HARBOUR WOLVES, DEAD CALM HORIZON:

Refined indie-rock soaked in harmonies and sweeping layers of lush instrumentation.



METRO NEWS SERVICES



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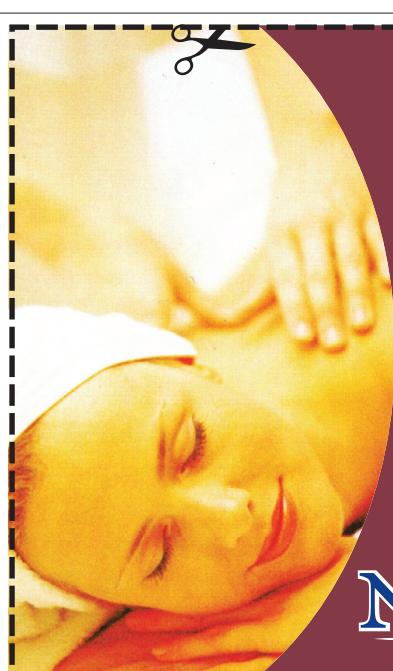


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Tonight: Franz Ferdinand is to be released in North America next week.

Back in the U.S.S.R.

Franz Ferdinand embraces Soviet technology

SoundCheck



alan@ongoinghistory.com

Franz Ferdinand singer Alex Kapranos looks pretty sharp for a man who, not 12 hours earlier, was in the middle of a sweaty club gig as part of a barnstorming promo ride for the group's third album. Drummer Paul Thomson isn't quite as chipper, although that can be attributed to a metabolism that doesn't process caffeine quite as efficiently. He perks up. Eventually.

After two albums in 18 months, it's been three years since the group's last album. So, what took so long? "Making this new record was different. The time it took wasn't so much a luxury as a necessity," sighs Kapranos.

"The adrenalin just runs

out," offers Thomson.

thesizer called a Polyvox.

There's been a substantial amount of fan speculation on the sound and direction of Tonight: Franz Ferdinand. Were the spiky, dual-tempo arrangements thrown in the bin? Was it going to have African influences? Or had it all gone Jamaican dub? "There are elements to truth to all those things," Kapranos says. "We listened to African music and Dan Carey, our producer, comes from a dub background. But it's still a Franz Ferdinand record. I mean, I listen to Dizzy Gillespie, but it doesn't mean we're going to make a be-bop record."

Well, maybe, but Domino — FF's U.K. label — is going to put out a special version of the album mixed in a dub style.

Kapranos and Thomas say it's an experiment. The version of the album that most people will hear, starting Tuesday, features experiments of its own, including the use of a long-forgotten Soviet-era syn-

thesizer called a Polyvox.

"It was another case of reverse engineering where the Soviets went, 'Right, we can build our own version of these (things)' — and would get it kind of wrong," explain Kapranos. "But their 'kind of wrong' is 'kind of good.' And it's true with the Polyvox. There was an electronic engineer in Kiev, I think, and he wanted to build a Moog (a U.S.-built synth). He knew the theory of how a Moog was built and had heard what they sounded like but had never seen one. So he built this machine that looks like the control panel of a Soviet tank, with big knobs and dials Cyrillic labels everywhere. And it sounds ... kind of vaguely like a Moog — but not really. It just sounds ... cool."

The whole FF story is coming up on my Ongoing History of New Music the first week of February.

The Ongoing History of New Music can be heard on stations across Canada. Read more at ongoinghistory.com and exploremusic.com

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Television

Warning: 2009 Oscars promise to be a snooze

IntelleVision

Rick McGinnis

rick.mcginnis@metronews.ca

RED CARPET BLUES: The awards season culminates next month in the Oscars, the worst show ever that millions of people watch with what we can only assume is the hope that a celebrity will embarrass themselves with a blubbering acceptance speech that bares their pitiful insecurity for all the world to see.

Actually, the conventional wisdom is that people watch the interminable movie awards ceremony to see a film they enjoyed win, with the corollary effect that the highest-rated Os-

"Nominations for the Oscars were announced yesterday (and) conspicuously absent was The Dark Knight, a film whose massive box office clearly inspired reverse esteem in the Academy's voters."

cars are the ones where a blockbuster like *Titanic* or a *Lord Of The Rings* film does a sweep. If this is true — and there's more than enough evidence to assume that it is — then Marc Caro of the *Chicago Tribune* is right and ABC will be taking a bath on its broadcast this year.

Nominations for the Oscars were announced yesterday, and conspicuously absent was *The Dark Knight*, a film whose massive box office clearly inspired reverse esteem in the Academy's voters. Only a posthumous nod for Heath Ledger's Joker as Best Supporting Actor put *The Dark*

Knight in any of the top categories, though it's well-represented in the technical categories (art direction, cinematography, sound mixing and editing), when viewers usually get their pizza delivery.

Continuing a trend that's dominated the Oscars for a few years now, the films with the most high-profile nominations are either critical duds, box office underperformers — or both. "The Reader is a best picture (and director) nominee, and *The Dark Knight* is not," writes Caro with obvious disbelief. "Yes, the highbrow Holocaust film with lukewarm reviews is in the game!"

The 81st Annual Academy Awards

Even the best song category won't pull in viewers, as voters swatted away the chance to have Bruce Springsteen, Miley Cyrus, Beyoncé or even Clint Eastwood perform in favour of Peter Gabriel doing the credits song from *Wall-E* (i.e. the cue to head for the exits) and no less than two songs from *Slumdog Millionaire*, which will at least mean some Bollywood production values. It's at times like this that network executives outdo Hugo Chavez in their contempt for fickle, ungovernable democracy.

Rick McGinnis writes about music, movies, books and television, but not opera.



Don't miss the next episode of *Battlestar Galactica* on Friday.

Rick's TV Picks

Battlestar Galactica

Air date: Jan. 23

Network: Space

Cancer, depression, demoralization, rebellion, cuckoldry; it's another happy hour on the non-stop party spaceship as the show picks up speed for the final stretch. **SPOILER ALERT:** At least no one dies.

Confessions of a Teen Idol

Air date: Jan. 25

Network: MuchMoreMusic

YOU might have heard of at least three of the seven men making a second

lunge for fame in this VH1 reality show hosted by Scott Baio. One of them won't be the guy from the first season of *The Real World*.

Project Runway Canada

Air date: Jan. 27

Network: Global

THE Canadian franchise of the fashion reality show gets upgraded from Slice to the mother network for its second season. If nothing else, the show has done the nation a service by proving at least our fashion designers can be bitchy on a global standard.

—RICK MCGINNIS/

METRO CANADA

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JEREMY HOTZ
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Settlements reached in U.S. TV reality labour

TELEVISION Several major U.S. TV networks and the producers of such reality shows as *Trading Spouses* and *The Bachelor* have agreed to pay over \$4 million to settle two lawsuits claiming violations of California wage rules.

The settlement will benefit more than 400 workers who were part of the 3-year-old class-action cases, and some of those individuals stand to reap tens of thousands of dollars, a lawyer

for the plaintiffs, Emma Leheny, said.

In addition to *Trading Spouses* and *The Bachelor*, the shows covered by the suits included *The Will*, *Are You Hot?*, *Joe Millionaire* and *My Big Fat Obnoxious Fiance*. The litigation coincided with a broader ongoing effort by the Writers Guild of America to obtain a labour contract for the creative workers behind unscripted TV productions as a whole.

REUTERS

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1 WINNER

Clooney back on ER

George Clooney has agreed to come back to the show that launched his career: ER. Sources close to the series tell People magazine that ER co-creator John Wells has ordered a closed set to keep Clooney's appearance under wraps. [PEOPLE.COM](http://people.com)

Family focus of holiday

Chinese New Year a time to celebrate good luck, prosperity

JOSEPHINE LIM
for Metro Canada

immediate family — aunts and uncles will hand them out as well.

The envelopes are decorated in red and gold, the two colours for the holiday. Red represents good luck and prosperity, while gold means good fortune and power.

On this day, the house is cleaned in preparation for guests and a big feast is prepared in celebration.

One popular food to eat during this time is dumplings.

"The whole family gets together to make that," says Thompson. "In Northern China, they eat that on New Year's Eve."

On New Year's Day, families will go around to different households to visit their relatives and wish them a happy new year. Red envelopes are also exchanged during this time.

The holiday itself has evolved over the years and habits like giving cards has become a norm. "In olden China, we had cards, but it wasn't so popular," says Thompson. "But now,

"New Year's Eve is the time the family will get together."

Chai Thompson

everybody is sending cards."

Wal-Mart Canada has gone a step further, and since last year, the company has introduced Chinese ornaments, posters, paper cut-outs, lanterns and even plush toys for the holiday.

The top sellers of those

were the lanterns, says Karin Campbell, the manager of corporate affairs for Wal-Mart Canada.

This year, they've also expanded the number of stores that carry these from 20 to 36, says Campbell.

From her customer information, she also says that they've found many non-Asian families have been purchasing these items, as well. As for other cultures celebrating Chinese New Year too, some people don't



Dinner with family is one of the most important events to ring in the Chinese New Year.

seem to mind.

"We're happy to share everything with a different culture just to let people know the Chinese culture," says Kevin Fan, the office manager at the Winnipeg Chinese Cultural Centre.

FRIDAY

HA	H	D	B	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
prime time 1/23/09	31	31	31	ABC	News (N)	ABC Wld News	Inside Edition	Chronicle	Wife Swap	Supernanny (N)	20/20	
	7	7	7	ASN	The Road to Avonlea	Instant Star	TMZ (N)	Wife Swap	Supernanny (N)	Stargate SG-1		
	11	11	11	CBC	Coronation St.	Jeopardy! (N)	Rick Mercer	Marketplace	Montreal Canadiens-100 Years	CBC News: The National	The Hour	
	32	32	32	CBS	News (N)	Evening News	The Insider (N)	Entertainment	Ghost Whisperer (N)	Flashpoint (HDTV) (N)	NUMB3RS (N)	
	6	6	6	CIHF	Entertainment	ET Canada	NUMB3RS (HDTV) (N)	Howie Do It (N)	Howie Do It (N)	Friday Night Lights (N)	News (N)	
	9	9	9	CJCH	etalk	Hollywood	Raising the Bar (N)	Ghost Whisperer (N)	Flashpoint (HDTV) (N)	News (N)		
	36	36	36	FOX	Deal-No Deal	The Simpsons	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Smarter Than a 5th Grader?	Don't Forget the Lyrics!	Fox First	
	12	12	12	NBC	News (N)	NBC News	Hollywood	Extra (N)	Howie Do It (N)	Friday Night Lights (N)	Dateline NBC	
	55	55	55	SCOR	Hockey Talk	Game On	World Cup of Poker		WWE SmackDown!		Score Tonight	
	53	53	53	TSN	Off the Record	SportsCentre	That's Hockey!	Strongest Man	Strongest Man	NBA Basketball	Toronto Raptors at Chicago Bulls.	
	16	16	16	A&E	Cold Case Files (HDTV)	CSI: Miami "Vengeance"	CSI: Miami (HDTV)	CSI: Miami (HDTV)	CSI: Miami (HDTV)	The Beast		
	70	70	70	APTN	News	Mixed Blessing	Fish Out	Rabbit Fall	The Rez	A Few Good Men ★★★ (1992, Drama)		
	37	37	37	BRVO	Street Legal	Prisoners of Age	Bravo! Fact	Beyond-Screen	White Palace ★★★ (1990, Romance)			
	49	49	49	COM	Laughs	Comedy Now	Air Farce	Good Morning	Corner Gas	22 Minutes	The Simpsons	South Park
	18	18	18	CNN	(5) The Situation Room	Lou Dobbs Tonight	Campbell Brown: No Bias	Larry King Live		Kathy Griffin		
	38	38	38	DISC	How It's Made	How It's Made	Daily Planet (N)	Discovery Project Earth	Man vs. Wild "Sahara"	Deranged (N)		
	34	48	48	HGTV	Holmes on Homes	House Hunters	Property Virgin	House Hunters	Extreme Home	Extreme Living	Location, Loc.	Around-World
	46	46	46	HIST	Urban Legends	Urban Legends	NCIS "Suspicion"	Shockwave	Urban Legends	Urban Legends	Ax Men	
	17	17	17	MM	Degrassi: TNG	Instant Star	Brooke Knows	America's Best Dance Crew	Undercover Brother (2002, Comedy)			
	206	206	206	PIX	Psycho Beach	Kind of a Blur	Gattaca ★★★ (1997, Science Fiction)	Ethan Hawke.	Swingers ★★★ (1996, Comedy)			
	39	39	39	SHOW	Wife Swap	The Outer Limits	Da Vinci's Inquest	Testees	Kenny-Spenny	Webdreams		
	40	40	40	SLICE	X-Weighted	Til Debt-Part	Rich Poor	In Laws	Newlywed	Wedding SOS	Wedding SOS	Hair Challenge
	21	21	21	TLC	What Not to Wear	Real Simple. Real Life. "Sue"	What Not to Wear	What Not to Wear	What Not to Wear (N)	Miss America		
	22	22	22	W	Style by Jury	Style by Jury	Will & Grace	Friends	The Closer	Dirty Dancing ★★★ (1987, Romance)		
	27	27	27	YTV	iCarly	Prank Patrol	Scorpion	Raise Your Voice ★★ (2004, Drama)	Hilary Duff, Oliver James.	Falcon Beach		

SATURDAY

HA	H	D	B	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
prime time 1/24/09	31	31	31	ABC	News (N)	Wrld News Sat	Legend of the Seeker	Lost "Destiny Calls"	Lost "Because You Left; The Lie"			
	7	7	7	ASN	The Road to Avonlea	Ocean Ranger Disaster	Lost "Destiny Calls"	Lost "Because You Left; The Lie"	Montreal Canadiens-100 Years			
	11	11	11	CBC	Sat. Report	Hockey Night	NHL Hockey Honda/NHL All-Star SuperSkills Competition. (HDTV) (Live)					
	32	32	32	CBS	News (N)	CBS News	Entertainment Tonight	Game Show	Game Show	CSI: NY "Admissions"	48 Hr. Mystery	
	6	6	6	CIHF	Global Currents: Thin Ice	Zero Hour	Mob Stories	Go Deep		News (N)		
	9	9	9	CJCH	W-FIVE-Swans	Law & Order: Criminal Intent	Law & Order: Criminal Intent	CSI: NY "Admissions"		News (N)		
	36	36	36	FOX	Friends	Friends	Colon Detox	Seinfeld	Cops (N)	Cops	America's Most Wanted	Fox First
	12	12	12	NBC	News (N)	NBC News	Access Hollywood (N)	Crusoe (HDTV) (N)	Crusoe (HDTV) (N)	Figure Skating: U.S. Championships		
	55	55	55	SCOR	Score Update	Footy Show	College Basketball Connecticut at Notre Dame. (Live)		Score on NFL	Footy Show	Score Update	
	53	53	53	TSN	SportsCentre	NFL Films	E:60	2009 Crashed Ice (HDTV) (Live)			Tennis	
	16	16	16	A&E	Paranormal	Paranormal	CSI: Miami "Dispo Day"	CSI: Miami (HDTV)	CSI: Miami (HDTV)	The Beast		
	70	70	70	APTN	Cooking-Wlfmn	MYTV	Music Speaks	The Mix	Rez Bluez Bluez Houndz.	Dangerous Liaisons ★★★ (1988, Drama)		
	37	37	37	BRVO	Arts & Minds	Bravo!Videos	Live at the Rehearsal Hall	Death at-Opera	Broadway	Little Voice ★★★ (1998, Comedy-Drama)		
	49	49	49	COM	Laughs	Comics!	Just for Laughs	Corner Gas	Blue Collar TV	The Simpsons	South Park	Zach
	18	18	18	CNN	The Situation Room	Newsroom	Campbell Brown: No Bias	Larry King Live		D.L. Hughley		
	38	38	38	DISC	How It's Made	How It's Made	Cash Cab (N)	Out in the Cold	Toughest Race: Iditarod	Destroyed	Time Warp	Criss Angel
	34	48	48	HGTV	Holmes on Homes	Colin & Justin's Home Heist	Top Design		Million Dollar Listing		Extreme-Home	
	46	46	46	HIST	Ax Men "The Final Haul"	NCIS "Light Sleeper"	Ancestors	Ancestors	Boogie Nights ★★★ (1997, Drama)			
	17	17	17	MM	America's Best Dance Crew	Undercover Brother ★★★ (2002, Comedy)	Eddie Griffin.	Gossip Girl (HDTV)		Muchmsc Ctdn		
	206	206	206	PIX	(6:10) Wonder Boys	(8:10) Deep Blue Sea ★★ (1999, Science Fiction)			Blue Velvet ★★★ (1986, Suspense)			
	39	39	39	SHOW	NUMB3RS (HDTV)	Mutant X	Every Second Counts (2008, Drama)	Stephen Collins.		X-Men: Last		
	40	40	40	SLICE	Beautiful	Mr. Friday	Last 10	Last 10	Party Mamas	Inside Hollywood	Housewives	
	21	21	21	TLC	What Not to Wear	What Not to Wear	Party Mamas	Party Mamas	Inside Hollywood		Making Over	
	22	22	22	W	Hwd 10 Best	Four Weddings and a Funeral ★★★ (1994, Romance-Comedy)	Hugh Grant.	Miss America 2009 (HDTV) From Las Vegas. (Live)	Runaway Bride ★★ (1999, Romance-Comedy)			
	27	27	27	YTV	Kid vs. Kat	Kid vs. Kat	Team Galaxy	Team Galaxy	Zixx Level	Storm Hawks	Naruto	Bleach

SUNDAY

HA	H	D	B	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
prime time 1/25/09	31	31	31	ABC	News (N)	ABC News	Funniest Home Videos	Extreme Makeover: Home Edition "Tutwiler Family" (N)				
	7	7</td										

Going Out

Mix of Six

Terminal Release comes to Halifax

When Friday, 10 p.m.
Where Marquee Club

Matt Mays & El Torpedo are bringing their "Terminal Release" tour back to Halifax, after playing across the country. Opening for them are the Arkells. Tickets are \$25 advance, \$30 day of show. Must be 19 or over. Phone 1-888-311-9090 or visit ticketatlantic.ca.

Max Pellicano as Elvis Presley

When Friday and Saturday
Where Schooner Showroom,
Casino Nova Scotia

Love the King? Max Pellicano's the next best thing, and he's paying tribute to Elvis Presley at Casino Nova Scotia this weekend. You have to be 19 or over to go. Tickets are \$25; 451-1221 or ticketatlantic.ca.

Moose battle it out with the Remparts

When Friday, 7 p.m.
Where Halifax Metro Centre

Will the Moose ride herd over the Quebec Remparts, owned by former NHL star goalie Patrick Roy? Watch the Herd play Roy's team Friday night and find out! Tickets are \$9 youth, \$10.75 students/seniors, \$14.50 adults; 451-1221, ticketatlantic.ca

Skin Flick

When Friday, 8 p.m.; Saturday,
8:30 p.m.; Sunday, 2 p.m.
Where Neptune Theatre

Neptune's Skin Flick tells the rather timely story of a couple who, after losing all their money in the stock markets, try making a porn movie to get their money back. It's a comedy from Norm Foster, writer of The Love List. Tickets are \$15.60 to \$32.00.

Rainmen take on the Stampede

When Sunday, 4 p.m.
Where Halifax Metro Centre

The Halifax Rainmen take on the Buffalo Stampede. Will the Rainmen triumph with help from new forward John Strickland? Or will they feel the loss of suspended star Eric Crookshank? Tickets are \$11 for kids, \$14 for students or seniors, \$18 for adults, and \$30 for floor. Call 451-1221 or visit ticketatlantic.ca.

Dead of Winter

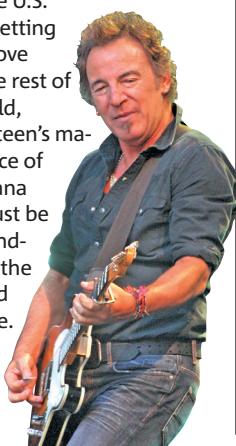
When Wed. Jan. 28 through
Sat. Jan. 31, 7 p.m. onward
Where Various locations

The Dead of Winter festival brightens up January with great music including Meg Hutchinson, The Good Lovelies, Gypsophilia and more. It wraps up with a Buck 65 performance on Jan. 31. Check inthedeadofwinter.com for more details. Tickets are \$15 and up; ticketweb.ca.

Metro's 7th Heaven: Metro taps what's hot right now

1 Bruce Springsteen

As the new boss — Barack Obama, that is — settles down in his job, the real Boss returns to business with this presciently titled album, Working on a Dream. With the U.S. finally getting a little love from the rest of the world, Springsteen's majestic slice of Americana might just be the soundtrack to the renewed romance.



2 Amy Winehouse

The velvet-throated train-wreck is still keeping us on our toes. Has she found a new love? Will hubby Blake Fielder-Civil dump her? Has she really cleaned up, as claimed by daddy dear? Stack up the popcorn and stay tuned.



3 Slumdog Millionaire

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button might be the Oscar frontrunner, but Slumdog's still the popular puppy. This rags-to-riches tale set in the unrelenting backdrop of Mumbai will probably be the most fun you'll have at the theatres now. The 10 Academy nods don't hurt either.



4 Heineken

Women have the walk-in closet. And, now thanks to this Dutch

commercial, men have the walk-in beer cooler. YouTube it and watch it yourself.

5 Honda Insight

Gearheads went all gooey over this revamped hybrid when it was recently unveiled at the Detroit and Montreal auto shows. Claiming to be the cheapest of its kind (pundits are betting on \$19,000), the Insight may just make green driving affordable for someone besides George Clooney. Coming to Canadian dealers in April.



6 Washington D.C.

Has the hub of world power ever looked this sexy? Granted, you may never catch a glimpse of the O-Man himself but with free entries to most major attractions in the city, this is the place to go with the paltry travel budget the recession will allow.



7 Obama books

Want to see beyond the charismatic smile and the fiery speeches? Here are five books that will get you up to date about the new U.S. president:

- *The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming The American Dream*/Barack Obama: A vision for the future in his own words. A must-read.
- *Dreams from my Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*/Barack Obama: A personal take on his own life, with charming insights into his mixed heritage and how that made him the man that he is today.
- *Barack Obama: Son of Promise, Child of Hope*/Nikki Grimes: This illustrated book is the perfect way to introduce your tiny ones to Obama.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

School Review: Saint Mary's

The Halifax Regional School Board is currently conducting a school review of Saint Mary's School, a grade Primary to six school in Halifax.

In accordance with the *Education Act and Regulations*, an *Impact Assessment Report* has been prepared looking at potential options regarding the future of the school.

A Study Committee has been formed and has responded to the *Impact Assessment Report*.

As part of the process, the school board will hold public meetings to give the public an opportunity to make representations to the Study Committee's response.

The meetings will take place at the following times:

Tuesday, February 17, 2009, 6 p.m.
Saint Mary's School
5614 Morris Street

(If necessary)

Thursday, February 19, 2009, 6 p.m.
Saint Mary's School
5614 Morris Street

Members of the public interested in making a representation should contact the Halifax Regional School Board at 464-2000 ext. 2321 or e-mail corporatesecretary@hrsb.ns.ca.

A copy of the *Impact Assessment Report* and the Study Committee's response can be found on the board's website at www.hrsb.ns.ca/content/id/1030.html or by contacting the board using the information listed above.

A decision on the future of Saint Mary's School will be made by the school board no later than March 31, 2009.

The board could decide, among other things, to:

- keep the school open;
- consolidate the school, or a part of the school, with another public school; or
- permanently close the school.



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Tattoo artist puts her pen to paper

BRIAN TOWIE
Metro Canada

Getting a tattoo? Whatever you do, don't copy your favourite celebrities.

It's among the handy tips of tattooing dos and don'ts to be found in Kat Von D's new book, *High Voltage Tattoo*, a photo-driven compendium of one of the world's most notorious tattoo artist's previous work, artistic influences and childhood memories. The star of TLC show *L.A. Ink* and partner of Motley Crue bassist Nikki Sixx delves into the often misunderstood world of tattoo art and the stories behind her markings and those of her best friends and previous clients.

"It was a long time coming," says Von D (née Katherine Von Drachenberg). "The show educates people about the tattoo world and the book is a more in-depth personal look at it."

The Los Angeles-based tattoo artist and soon to be film star (appearing in 2009 vampire flick *The Bleeding*) has tattooed celebrities such as Jackass' Steve-O and Bam Margera, among others. She showcases designs as elaborate and dynamic as something found in an art museum, from reproductions of

PHOTO COURTESY HIGH VOLTAGE TATTOO



Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* on the side of a torso, to more comedic works. Her personal favourites are two portraits of a friend's grandparents. Over the grandfather lies a banner saying, "Mona, get me a beer!" The grandmother's depiction replies, "Get it yourself!"

"Tattoos are a collaborative thing," the 26-year-old says. "The dynamic between artist and client is a pretty free one. The client comes in with an idea and they create a vision together. The idea is always rooted with a client and a good tattooer will take it and make it better."

The world of tattoos isn't all wild rock 'n' roll abandon, however. Von D says she's taken sharp criticism

from purists in the business who accuse her of "selling out."

"The best advice I'd give anyone getting a tattoo for the first time would be to have a 100 per cent certain idea of what you want to get."

Kat Von D

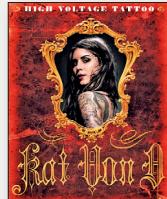
Keeping a steady hand while you work on someone's skin can also demand a great deal of strength and stamina. Von D points to Dec 14, 2007, when she set a Guinness World Record for doing the most tattoos in a 24-hour period by tattooing more than 400 arms, backs, legs and rear ends. "I just crashed for a whole day when I was done," she said.

It's no cakewalk for a recipient, either. You'll sit in a chair in uncomfortable circumstances for a period of time, so Von D suggests you have a fair idea of what you want done.

"The best advice I'd give anyone getting a tattoo for the first time would be to have a 100 per cent certain idea of what you want to get and not to get something because Nicole Richie has it," she said. "And don't get it because your boyfriend wants you to. And do your research: There's a lot of talent out there that nobody knows about."

Fresh ink

- High Voltage Tattoo is the new book from Kat Von D.



Group protests new Spears song

SINGLES The Parents Television Council is warning about the Britney Spears song *If U Seek Amy* and urging radio stations not to broadcast it because the non-profit organization believes it "would violate the broadcast indecency law."

Saying the title phrase quickly out loud produces a sound akin to spelling out the F-word, said PTC president Tim Winter.

"There is no misinterpreting the lyrics to this song, and it's certainly not about a girl named Amy," he said.

REUTERS

GOOD THINGS HAPPEN IN 3s



Correctly identify the 3 Rainmen players whose numbers, were somewhere in Metro Wednesday, Thursday & the final number which appears today

3 qualifiers will be drawn today and will receive tickets to Metro Night with the Rainmen, Jan. 29 and will compete at half-time for a

CHANCE TO WIN

SAMSUNG 40" HD LCD TELEVISION

courtesy of



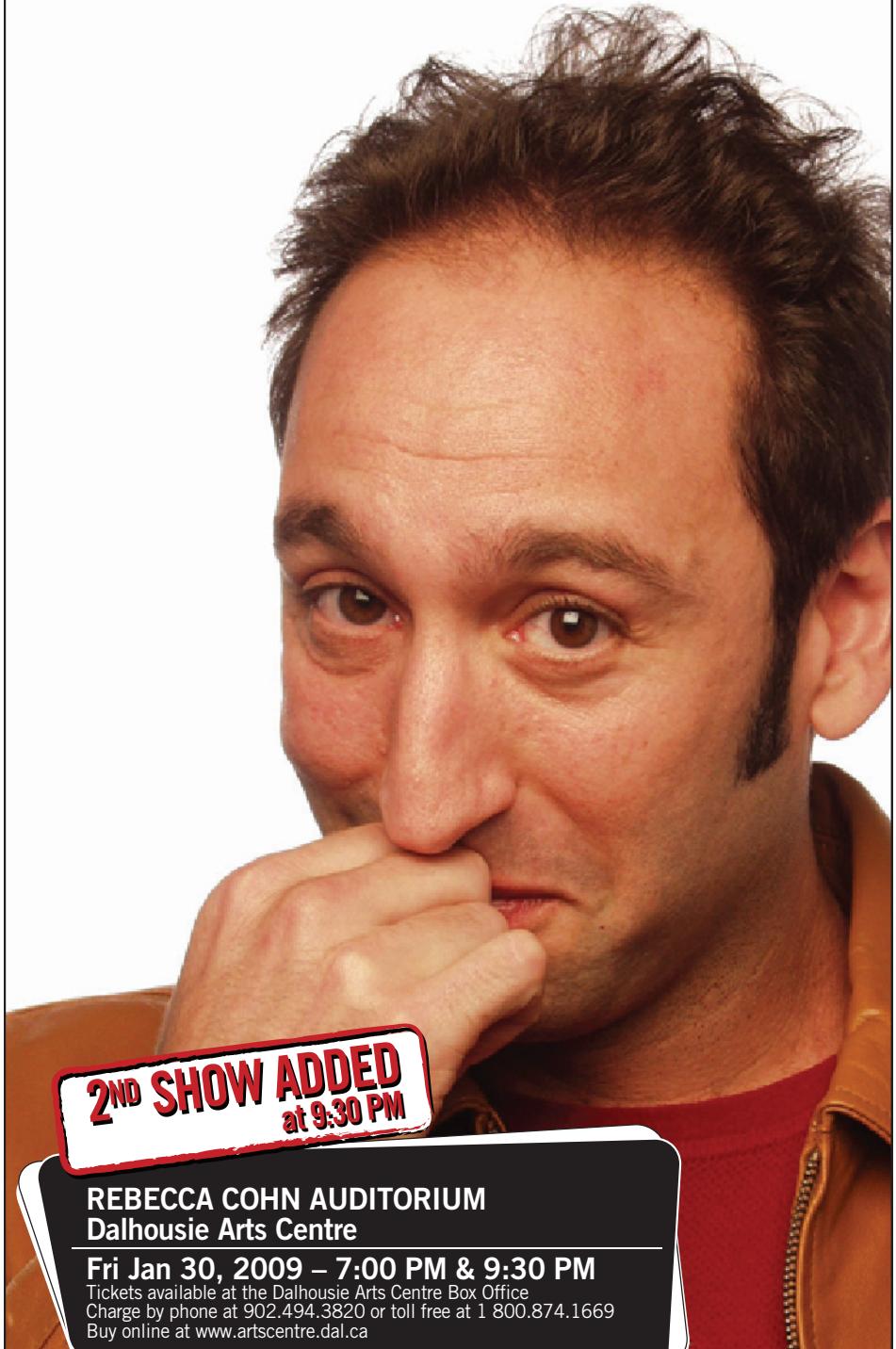
See the basketball ad for how to qualify!

Half-time contestants will be notified and printed Jan. 27

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JEREMY HOTZ

WHAT A MISERABLE TOUR THIS IS...



2ND SHOW ADDED
at 9:30 PM

REBECCA COHN AUDITORIUM
Dalhousie Arts Centre

Fri Jan 30, 2009 - 7:00 PM & 9:30 PM

Tickets available at the Dalhousie Arts Centre Box Office
Charge by phone at 902.494.3820 or toll free at 1 800.874.1669
Buy online at www.artscentre.dal.ca

Go to metronews.ca to enter
for a chance to win tickets.

No purchase necessary. One entry per person. Contest open to Canadian residents of legal age, excluding residents of Quebec. Contest closes January 23, 2009 at 11:59pm. Odds of winning depend on number of entries received. For full contest rules and details, visit www.metronews.ca.



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www.jeremyhotz.com



Mendes is most desirable woman, says poll
Eva Mendes has been named the most desirable woman of 2009 by AskMen.com, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The Spirit actress topped a poll of men who were asked to name their ideal woman. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Celebrity Buzz

Police investigate extortion attempt

INVESTIGATION Police in the Bahamas have launched an investigation surrounding an attempt to extort money from John Travolta's family, Obie Wilchcombe, a member of the Bahamian Parliament, confirmed to Usmagazine.com.

The full details of the plot have not been released, but Us magazine quotes Wilchcombe as saying only one person — not two, which has been reported — is involved. A Bahamian newspaper, The Tribune, has suggested that the extortion attempt is connected to the recent loss of 16-year-old Jett Travolta, who died of a seizure disorder Jan. 2 at the family's vacation home in the Bahamas.

Wilchcombe denied reports that the person be-

hind the plot is a politician. "The lawyer who brought the situation to my attention is a politician," he clarifies.

Wilchcombe says he was approached about the extortion plot early last week

and passed along the information to Travolta's lawyers, Michael Ossi and Michael McDermott, usmagazine.com adds.

"The irony was that the Travolta family just sent a letter of gratitude — it happened that afternoon," says Wilchcombe, referring to a Jan. 12 statement issued by McDermott, Travolta's lawyer, thanking the people of the Bahamas for their support.

"I thought it was a despicable act," Wilchcombe tells Us when he first heard news of the extortion plot. "One person should not destroy the character of the country."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

GETTY IMAGES PHOTOS



Depp's partner returns engagement ring

RELATIONSHIP Johnny Depp's long-term partner Vanessa Paradis has returned an engagement ring he bought her, people.com reports.

The Pirates of the Caribbean star was recently spotted shopping for the band in California, but Vanessa — who he has been with for 10 years — reportedly took it back as she was unhappy with the design.

A source said: "Johnny got Vanessa a drop-dead gorgeous engagement band but she returned it to the jeweller. She wants her ring to be absolutely perfect."

The couple

— who have two children, Lily-Rose, nine, and six-year-old Jack, together — are yet to officially announce they are planning to tie the knot, but are rumoured to be marrying in April.

The pair are keen to keep the ceremony as intimate as possible, and will only invite 50 of their closest

friends and family to the service which will be held in a chapel on the grounds of their \$1.25 million US French estate.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Kardashian happy about Razzie

CAREER For Kim Kardashian, it's great just to be nominated — even if it is for a Razzie, people.com reports.

"I'm having a really good laugh," the actress writes on her blog. "I had so much fun filming Disaster Movie and giggled the entire time during the shoot."

The reality star, 28, adds, "There is steep competition in my worst supporting actress category. I have to admit ... including my fantastic co-star Carmen Electra (you go girl!)."

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Aniston turning 40

PEOPLE Jennifer Aniston is planning a star-studded 40th birthday party, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The former Friends actress, who reaches the landmark age on Feb. 11, wants to celebrate early with a lavish bash at her new Beverly Hills home on Feb. 7.

The guest list will include Jennifer's boyfriend John Mayer, her close pal Courteney Cox and her husband David Arquette and singer Sheryl Crow.

It is believed the actress is

planning the early festivities because John wants to take her away for a romantic break for her actual birthday.

The pair will leave for their intimate getaway — which will also take in Valentine's Day — straight after the party.

Rumours are ripe that John is set to propose on Jennifer's big day, and has splashed out on a custom-made engagement ring for her.

METRO NEWS SERVICES



Federline packs on the pounds

HEALTH Kevin Federline appears to have packed on major pounds, usmagazine.com reports.

He showed off a fuller figure while golfing with a pal in Los Angeles Tuesday. His ex Shar Jackson explained to Us magazine last March that the 31-year-old rapper (who looked chunky last year) 31, had "daddy weight! When you are a full time parent, sometimes you can't focus on you."

Meanwhile, Federline's romance with volleyball player Victoria Prince, 26, seems to be heating up.

TMZ.com reports that she took Sean Preston, 3, and Jayden James, 2, out for dinner in Fresno, Calif., over the weekend.

METRO NEWS SERVICES



Perry takes vow of celibacy?

RUMOUR Katy Perry is taking a vow of celibacy, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The I Kissed a Girl singer has revealed she won't be smooching anyone this year, after splitting from Gym Class Heroes frontman Travis McCoy.

When Grammy-nominated Katy, 24, was asked who she would like to kiss at the upcoming awards, she said: "I've actually taken a vow of celibacy this year ... no kissing anyone."

"Just my cat, Kitty Purry."

Katy and Travis' two-year romance is believed to have ended amid a flurry of arguments.

A source said: "It's sad, but they were fighting a lot in recent months because they never saw each other."

"When somebody becomes very famous very quickly their relationship usually suffers."

METRO NEWS SERVICES



Hudson set to be back in spotlight

CAREER After dropping out of the public eye following her family murder tragedy, Jennifer Hudson now has the strength and the will to give three high-profile performances next month, a source close to her tells People magazine.

"So much has happened, but she's ready," people.com quotes the source as saying. "It's a new year, she's excited about performing again. She knew it was time."

Hudson, 27, will deliver the National Anthem at the Super Bowl on Feb. 1.

METRO NEWS SERVICES



Oprah celebrates with Obamas

PEOPLE While she might not have hosted a fancy inauguration party herself, Oprah Winfrey did get with a very select group of friends to celebrate the occasion with Barack and Michelle Obama.

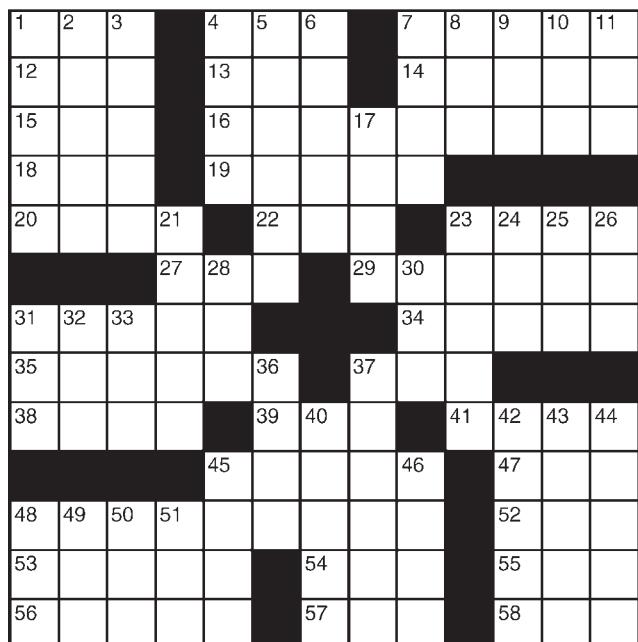
According to the Chicago Sun-Times, the new president and first lady capped off their big day just before 1 a.m. with a



METRO NEWS SERVICES

Today
Partly cloudy
-8° / -10°Saturday
Rain and snow
4° / -16°Sunday
Mainly sunny
-11° / -16°MORE CONVENIENT THAN A CORNER STORE
WeatherEye: Delivering real-time weather 24/7, right to your desktop...
Go to theweathernetwork.com/desktop to download your free WeatherEye.

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For more delicious Metro recipes, visit: metronews.ca/food

Crossword across

1 Hot tub
4 Chances, for short
7 Blubbers
12 Dress (up)
13 Dance flourish
14 Say one's piece
15 Lord's Prayer start
16 Noted newsmagazine, with "The"
18 Lemieux milieu
19 Toaster's word
20 Masticate
22 Screw up
23 Test the waters
27 Choose
29 December stone
31 Point of view

34 Dastardly one
35 Chat
37 Fool
38 Authentic
39 Every iota
41 Drink too much
45 Thwart
47 Upper limit
48 1969 Fellini movie
52 Greek vowel
53 Bewildered
54 Rd.
55 Solidify
56 Energetic
57 Wrangler rival
58 Skill

Crossword down

1 Unemotional
2 Joey's place?
3 Match
4 Wordsworth works
5 Type of fence
6 Animal track
7 "Groovy"
8 Spinning meas.
9 Midafternoon, on a sundial
10 Em halves
11 Collection
17 Bygone game-show host Jack
21 "The Right Stuff" author
23 Watch this space?
24 Expert
25 "SNL" announcer Pardo
26 Remnant

28 Shell game item
30 Conditions
31 Performance
32 Neither mate
33 Wildebeest
36 Indonesian island
37 Niche
40 Lifelong resident
42 Alpha's antithesis
43 Dad, in Devonshire
44 Put on a pedestal
45 Talk like 37-Across?
46 Banjo supporter
48 Chucklehead
49 Foolhardiness
50 Personalized
51 1/6 fl. oz.
52 Remnant

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:



5	7	3	1	4	8	6	2	9
8	9	4	5	6	2	1	7	3
6	1	2	7	3	9	4	5	8
2	5	1	9	7	4	8	3	6
3	4	8	6	2	5	9	1	7
9	6	7	3	8	1	5	4	2
4	8	6	2	1	3	7	9	5
7	3	9	4	5	6	2	8	1
1	2	5	8	9	7	3	6	4

Find today's answers + play more games at metronews.ca

SUDOKU SOLVE TIME:

Under 13 min Genius
13-17 min Scholar17-21 min Smart
21-25 min Not bad
25+ min Keep practising

smooth. Wrap in plastic and refrigerate 20 minutes before using.

2. Filling: Put steak, onion, potato, squash, stock and parsley in bowl. Season with salt and pepper and mix well.

3. Preheat oven to 400 F (200 C). Divide pastry into eight pieces. Roll out each to an 8-in. (20-cm) round.

4. Spoon equal amounts of filling onto centre of each pastry round. Brush edges with egg, then bring together at top. Press edges firmly together to seal, then crimp.

5. Place pockets on two non-stick baking trays. Brush with beaten egg. Make small holes in tops to let steam out.

6. Bake 15 minutes. Reduce heat to 325 F (160 C); cook 45 minutes to 1 hour, until pastry is golden and filling is cooked.

7. Serve hot, warm or cold.

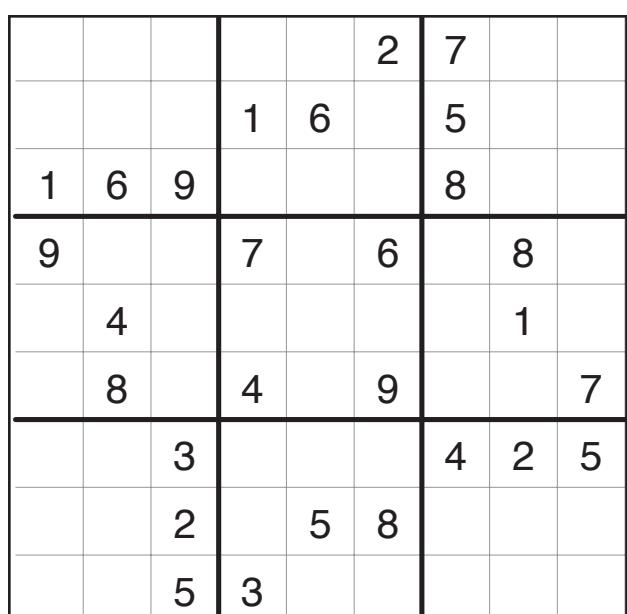
SERVES 8

rd.ca

For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to rd.ca or check out Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

Find today's answers + play more games at metronews.ca

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Horoscopes

ARIES

MARCH 21-APRIL 20



TAURUS

APRIL 21-MAY 21



Laughing is better than arguing with a misery-guts. Try to understand that a woman is tempted. Have fun with an old friend.

LIBRA

SEPT 23-OCT 23



You'll advise someone to avoid taking risks. Find the strength to speak out about respect. Quiet moments will ease your weary spirit.

SCORPIO

OCT 24-NOV 22



Your nurturing strengthens a weak man. Your daily life is being challenged by a stupid mistake. There'll be no secret messages.

GEMINI

MAY 22-JUNE 21



A non-stop talker will stand up for you. Nobody can diminish your high spirits. Change your routines to avoid seeing a jerk.

SAGITTARIUS

NOV 23-DEC 21



A breathtaking adventure will change your outlook. End an awkward situation immediately. You can have a good impact on an idiot.

CANCER

JUNE 22-JULY 22



Take a thrilling new direction after a phone call. Water problems can cause distress. Don't be hoodwinked by momentary rewards.

CAPRICORN

DEC 22-JAN 20



You can be certain of a chance for glory. An interesting story will explain poor behaviour. You'll struggle to strengthen an emotional bond.

LEO

JULY 23-AUG 23



People will be riled up by unreliable gossip. Be careful what you put in e-mails. Exhaustion has unforeseen consequences.

AQUARIUS

JAN 21-FEB 18



Don't lose sleep over a minor problem. You have the courage to do fascinating things. Take other people's wickedness into account.

VIRGO

AUG 24-SEPT 22



A flirtation will result from a strong emotional connection. Your heart's desire can be fulfilled. Dreadful behaviour will cause you to feel insecure.

PISCES

FEB 19-MARCH 20



A friend's defiance will result in more respect. Don't take chances with your health. An elder is suffering from embarrassment.

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